



Centre for
Humanitarian
Dialogue

Mediation for peace



Developing strategic responses to displacement in South Sudan

Christine Johnson, Dr. Edward Thomas and
David Mozersky with Naana Marekia

The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (The HD Centre)

is a private diplomacy organisation founded on the principles of humanity, impartiality and independence. Its mission is to help prevent, mitigate, and resolve armed conflict through dialogue and mediation.

Disclaimer

This publication has been funded by UK aid from the UK Government. However the views expressed in this publication are those of its author and do not necessarily reflect the UK Government's official policies or the views of the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue.

Acknowledgement

HD would like to thank the UK Government for its financial support toward the implementation of this project.

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Executive summary | ii |
| Acronyms..... | 1 |
| Developing strategic responses to displacement in South Sudan | 2 |
| 1. Introduction | 2 |
| 2. Methodology | 2 |
| 3. The political and economic context..... | 4 |
| 3.1 Historical background | 4 |
| 3.2 International assistance | 4 |
| 3.3 The violence of December 2013..... | 5 |
| 3.4 The IGAD Peace Process and its aftermath | 6 |
| 3.5 The economic situation | 7 |
| 3.6 Future scenarios..... | 7 |
| 4. Patterns of displacement and mobility | 8 |
| 4.1 Historical movements..... | 8 |
| 4.2 Intersecting patterns of displacement and mobility..... | 9 |
| 5. Overview of findings from the field research..... | 12 |
| 5.1 Local dynamics | 12 |
| 5.2 Complex patterns of displacement..... | 13 |
| 5.3 Solidarity, agency and social change..... | 15 |
| 5.4 The impact of the conflict on livelihoods | 15 |
| 5.5 Humanitarian response..... | 17 |
| 5.6 Options for return..... | 18 |
| 6. Conclusions..... | 19 |
| 7. Recommendations..... | 21 |
| Annex A: Report of visit to Upper Nile..... | 26 |
| Annex B: Report of visit to Unity | 32 |
| Annex C: Report of visit to Jonglei..... | 38 |

Executive summary

Introduction and methodology

Given the dire humanitarian crisis in South Sudan, DFID commissioned research into patterns of displacement in order to guide policy and planning. The fieldwork covered the areas most affected by the post-2013 conflict; Upper Nile, Jonglei and Unity. It did not cover the new areas of conflict (e.g. the Equatorias) which would merit further work. The researchers visited Protection of Civilians (POC) sites, informal internally displaced person (IDP) settlements receiving international or government assistance, and dispersed places hosting displaced people which are either not receiving assistance or only assistance from a local community. Sites were chosen to ensure a mix of factors, including displacement in zones of active or recent conflict as well as relatively stable areas, and whether IDPs were living among people perceived as being on the same side in the conflict or not. In all cases, people were accessed through partnerships with organisations with strong links to communities. The findings were tested at a validation workshop held in Juba, and the report was externally reviewed.

Context

The territory which constitutes the present-day state of South Sudan has seen many violent conflicts and it is the combined impact of these, not just the events since December 2013, which will determine the decisions the displaced make about their futures. Splits in the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) that date from Sudan's second civil war continue to shape conflicts today. The signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) halted the worst of the fighting but only partially dealt with the problems of South Sudan. The extremely high levels of violence experienced in the most recent conflict, and the seeming reluctance of the main actors to sign a peace agreement, also shape thinking about the future. The problems are exacerbated by the weak economy and collapsing currency, and this will constrain options for both government and the displaced. The future therefore remains very uncertain, and triggers which might lead to a worsening of security include the cumulative impact of economic stress, obstacles in the implementation of the peace agreement, the failure to satisfactorily resolve the conflict over the President's decision to move from 10 to 28 states, and the competition which will be created by future elections.

For many IDPs, this is not the first time they have faced displacement – and knowledge of historical patterns can help in understanding how people might move and settle in the future. Maintaining mobility in uncertainty is a key part of many livelihoods, and of self-protection. Such stress-related migrations impact on other communities, sometimes causing tensions but also resulting in co-operation. Some of those most involved in, and affected by, displacement have been South Sudan's pastoralist groups and they have developed a variety of strategies to restock their cattle and cope with disruption to their livelihoods – including waged labour, migration and the use of bridewealth. Over time, even the rural poor have become dependent on markets for a significant proportion of their basic foods, yet access to markets is unevenly distributed which significantly affects their options. Urbanization in South Sudan has also been at one of the fastest rates in the world and, despite the destruction of Malakal and Bentiu, this overall trend is likely to continue.

Overview of findings from the research

The conflict has played out in different ways in different places, but in all cases the patterns of displacement have been complex and protracted. Malakal town, for example, has been attacked on at least 12 occasions, each time leading to different inflows/outflows of

civilians from the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) Protection of Civilians (POC) site. Shilluk civilians have been targeted by both sides at different times, as armed groups linked to the Shilluk constituency have changed sides. While Shilluk involvement in the civil war is overshadowed by the larger Dinka-Nuer narrative it is a major factor in the conflict dynamics of Upper Nile, where the Shilluk are fighting more for a local agenda – the ownership and control of their traditional lands. In Unity, many of the displaced Nuer believed they were deliberately driven off their lands so they could not support the armed opposition. Interviewees feared further rounds of violence unless those who had ordered the killings were brought to justice. Many of these IDPs had fled multiple times as the conflict moved back and forth across the state, fleeing bullets, undertaking horrific journeys through swamps and losing family members in the process. Bentiu, like Malakal, was attacked many times and largely destroyed. Jonglei has been different. Since government forces re-established their hold on Bor in early 2014, it has been slowly recovering, while Akobo – on the Ethiopian border – has become something of a refuge for displaced Nuer. Duk county, with a population that is largely bilingual in Nuer and Dinka, has proved a vital resource for people trying to overcome conflict and has become a place of exchange and trade between Nuer and Dinka communities.

The creation of the POC sites in UNMISS bases is unprecedented. IDPs appreciate the (limited) protection they offer but do not like living there; they stay because of insecurity outside. Although highly visible, they accommodate just a small fraction of the displaced and most IDPs survive through the solidarity offered by other South Sudanese. Even the poorest households are hosting displaced people. In contrast to those in the POC sites, IDPs in southern Unity were not visible because everyone was integrated into the community. IDPs spoke of incredible acts of generosity: people gave them a place to stay and shared food and clothes. Some had relatives in Nyal but many knew no one. Similarly, in Jonglei many people use kinship networks to get accommodation and food. The fact that women play an inconspicuous but vital role in mobility and in keeping different societies connected is often overlooked.

Displacement is changing society. The less mobile elements of pastoralist families now sometimes stay under plastic sheeting in a town, eating relief food that arrives for four or five months a year and supporting people in their areas of origin and in dry season pastures.

The impact of the conflict on food security has been severe, with many people requiring urgent humanitarian assistance. Many lost everything they had in attacks and were unable to plant due to insecurity. Some pastoralists have lost all their cattle; but, despite being a vital part of social and economic life, the cattle economy – and the changes the conflict has wrought within it – is poorly understood and this needs addressing if appropriate recovery strategies are to be developed. The challenge to humanitarian actors has been immense and issues around logistics, access, and funding mean that distributions of relief aid have been very irregular. Faced with these problems, people adopt a variety of strategies to survive. Women collect firewood – often at great risk – to sell or make charcoal. Men hunt and fish, get waged labour if they can, migrate if they have the means.

Despite the incredibly difficult situation the South Sudanese face, one of the key findings of the research is the remarkable ability they have to survive, to make decisions about their lives,

and to assist each other. There was little sign of people becoming dependent on aid, which for most people is not enough to meet all their needs. Despite enormous challenges, there were also examples of good, creative programming by implementing agencies. Even in areas badly affected by conflict, there are usually local organisations – such as church networks and local village or town committees – that are seen as legitimate by the population. There are also areas of relative stability in South Sudan; these can be key to supporting a wider community and yet their potential is often poorly understood and largely ignored. Some communities are willing to address issues of reconciliation and peace-building; although previous experience suggests that achievements will be limited if the national level agreement breaks down.

IDPs lacked good information on which to base decisions about return but most were clear that basic preconditions included the formation of the Transitional Government of National Unity and a big improvement in the security situation. Everyone spoke of the need for peace.

Recommendations

Communities should be supported to build up resilience so they can not only cope with current stresses but also be in a position to withstand future shocks. *This means:*

- Understanding and analysing the links between people's livelihood and protection strategies, and incorporating this analysis into programme design.
- Developing flexible programmes which can shift between humanitarian/recovery/development modalities as the context demands, or can draw on elements of all three.
- Developing programmes so that people to have more choice over their livelihood strategies.
- Designing programmes that help people maintain their social networks, which are key to building resilience.

Programmes should link livelihoods and protection activities. They should also seek to widen livelihoods options. Increasing use of unconditional cash transfer programmes would give people choice over how they use assets. Allowing IDPs to receive these at regular intervals regardless of their location would avoid creating a 'pull' factor and recognise that mobility is often crucial to people's survival. Programming on the basis of need rather than differentiating between IDPs and host communities would reduce tensions and strengthen the ability to sustain support.

Programmes need to be appropriate to the local context – one size cannot fit all. *This means:*

- Recognising that different parts of the country have experienced this conflict differently, and having a planning process that takes this into account.
- Investing time in understanding the history and the political economy of an area.
- Building on areas of relative stability to increase their ability to support displacement and, if necessary, act as a safe haven in the future.

While recognising what is possible will vary between areas, programmes should aim to work with local support mechanisms (local government, local committees, churches etc.) rather

than building parallel systems. This does not necessarily mean putting funding through these bodies, but rather seeing them as part of the means by which people are reached and decisions made. Linking anthropologists and their insights to programme development would help design more relevant interventions.

Invest in the future. *This means:*

- Ensuring links are made to initiatives on peace, reconciliation and justice.
- Recognising that many people are severely traumatised and developing programmes to deal with this.
- Using whatever opportunities there are to give IDPs access to education and training.
- Offering alternatives to youth, though recognising that without a political solution to the conflict this will not prevent all youth from engaging in violence.

The South Sudanese were clear that what they most need is peace. While humanitarians cannot deliver this, programmes should connect with local peace-building efforts. The UK and other countries need to develop a political strategy which supports the implementation of the peace agreement and tries to solve the many problems around and beyond this. Early efforts to develop trauma-healing programmes which are appropriate at all levels of South Sudanese society should be strengthened. And, recognising that displacement will be protracted, wherever possible, educational facilities need to be opened, or re-opened, even if only on a temporary basis.

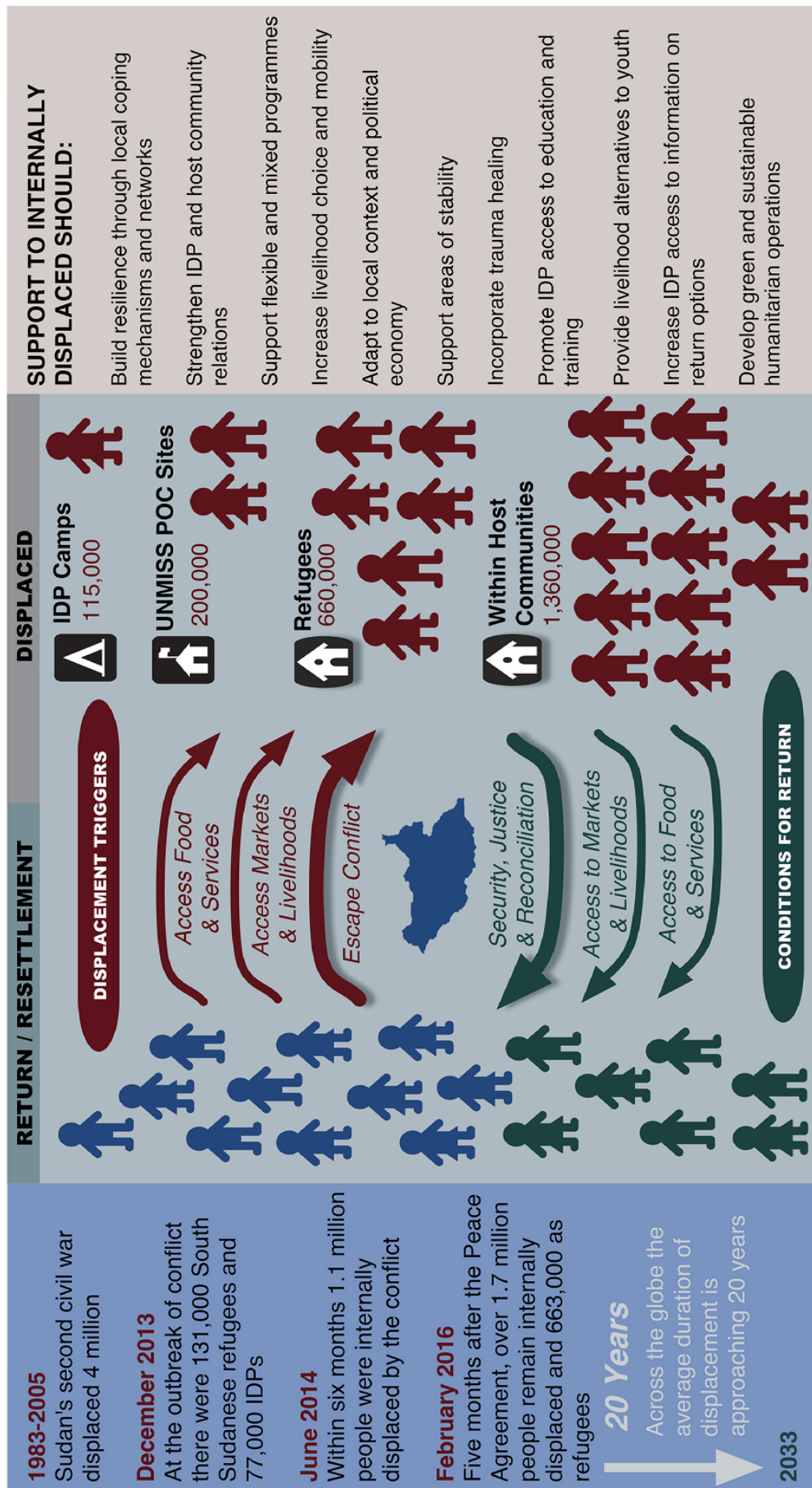
Support access for IDPs to the information they need to make informed decisions regarding return and resettlement. *This means:*

- Include programming to strengthen radio networks and their range, as well as dedicated radio programming on the security situation in specific areas and the distribution of more short wave solar/crank radios. Similarly, set up an SMS-based information network to enable people to access information about a specific area. People also need to make their choices with an understanding of the broader context and the likely implications for their safety and wellbeing. Visits by the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC) to explain the process for the implementation of the peace agreement and to give IDP communities an opportunity to discuss this would help.

Develop more sustainable humanitarian operations. *This means:*

- Prepare for a protracted situation in which humanitarian assistance, for all its limitations, will remain a vital part of people's survival strategy. Maintaining adequate funding and the quality of programming in the longer term will be a challenge. Donors should develop flexible and iterative strategies with multi-year funding which allow agencies to adapt their programming to changes in the context and to new opportunities to support peace-building, recovery and development initiatives. Humanitarian operations should also develop more sustainable and cost-effective ways of operating. The use of solar energy systems can provide reliable and cost-effective energy, cut reliance on diesel, and create a clean energy infrastructure which will outlive the humanitarian footprint.

DISPLACEMENT IN SOUTH SUDAN



Source: UNOCHA and Partners, South Sudan: Humanitarian Snapshot (February 2016); UNOCHA, 2016 Humanitarian needs overview, (November 2015); and Milner, J. and Loescher, G., Responding to protracted refugee situations: Lessons from a decade of discussion, RSC Policy Briefing Paper No.8 (2011).

Acronyms

| | |
|-----------|--|
| AUCISS | African Union Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan |
| ARCSS | Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan |
| CPA | Comprehensive Peace Agreement |
| DFID | Department for International Development |
| IDP | Internally displaced person |
| IGAD | Intergovernmental Authority on Development |
| IPC | Integrated Food Security Phase Classification |
| JMEC | Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission |
| NGO | Non-governmental organisation |
| OLS | Operation Lifeline Sudan |
| POC | Protection of Civilians |
| SSDF | South Sudan Defence Forces |
| SSDM/A | South Sudan Democratic Movement/Army |
| SSP | South Sudan Pound |
| SPLM/A | Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army |
| SPLM-DC | Sudan People's Liberation Movement-Democratic Change |
| SPLM/A-IO | Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army-In Opposition |
| TGoNU | Transitional Government of National Unity |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| UNMISS | United Nations Mission in South Sudan |
| UNPOL | United Nations Police |
| OCHA | United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs |
| WFP | World Food Programme |

Developing strategic responses to displacement in South Sudan

Thanks and caveat

The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD) and the research team would like to convey their immense thanks to all the partner organisations that made this research possible. The support we got was superb and without it we would have achieved little. That said, it is also necessary to sound a note of warning: this was a short piece of research into a complex problem and it has raised as many questions as it has answered. There is much we still do not know, even in the areas we visited, and there are many areas we did not have time to visit. In particular, we did not look at newly emerging conflicts, and consequent patterns of displacement, in the Equatorias or Bahr el-Ghazals. Nor have we looked at refugee flows. Moreover, the situation remains in flux and we do not know what will happen in the future, even over the next few months. It will be important, therefore, to continue this process of research, deepening and broadening knowledge and tracking an evolving situation.

1. Introduction

By late 2015 more than 2.2 million people had been displaced, over 1.6 million of these internally, and almost 200,000 people had sought shelter in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) bases. Severe food insecurity was estimated to be affecting 4.6 million people, compared to 3.8 million at the height of the lean season in 2014.¹ At the same time it was recognised by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) that prioritising emergency response often meant that there was insufficient time to gather and analyse information to support planning for a highly complex situation. DFID therefore commissioned research into population movements following the December 2013 conflict and into lessons from the periods before and after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). The project aimed to:

- Improve understanding of current and historical displacement patterns and trends.
- Capture the current thinking of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and host communities on their plans, hopes and fears in specific conflict-affected locations.
- Provide an overview of existing evidence and generate new evidence to develop policy and recommendations for strategic planning.

The project was carried out by a team of experienced researchers who knew South Sudan well, working in partnership with a number of organisations on the ground.

2. Methodology

Any form of inquiry into displacement in South Sudan faces a number of challenges:

- Decades of research linked to the provision of assistance have led to a tendency towards choreographed answers designed to maximise humanitarian distributions;
- It has also led to assessment fatigue – people, especially in easy to reach sites, have seen too many foreigners coming to ask them questions, often with no follow-up of any sort;

- The current displacement is highly politicised, thus narratives of displacement are strongly controlled by political and community leaders;
- In many cases, what has happened has been deeply distressing to individuals and thus care needs to be taken not to add to their distress by pressurising them to revisit painful memories, although having people listen attentively can also be helpful – the issue is one of sensitivity and balance.

Faced with these obstacles, the research team adopted three main modes of inquiry:

- A desk review of existing literature, published and unpublished – this included not only literature on Sudan/South Sudan but also global studies where this helped frame the issues;²
- Key informant interviews with national and international staff, church leaders, local government officials and others working with the displaced and host communities;
- Individual interviews with IDPs and members of the host communities. These followed a semi-structured format and usually lasted at least an hour, sometimes longer.

Small group discussions were undertaken when these seemed natural but focus group discussions were not used as a main method of inquiry as it was feared these would produce controlled narratives. The research team accessed people through partnerships with organisations that had strong links into communities and were trusted by them. These organisations also organised interpreters for us, so that they were known and trusted by those being interviewed.

Research sites

In order to decide where to visit, a basic typology of displacement was drawn up. This sorted displacement into three broad types:

- POC sites;
- Informal IDP settlements that are being assisted by international or government actors;
- Dispersed displacement or small gatherings that are either not assisted at all or only get assistance from a local community.

Further considerations included whether the displacement was into a zone of active or recent conflict or whether it was into a relatively stable area (recognising that this could change); and whether IDPs were living among people perceived as being on the same side in the conflict or with hosts from a different group.³ The field research concentrated on the areas of displacement that were a direct result of the December 2013 conflict, although the analysis of the context touches on the more recent spread of conflict since understanding this is an important part of formulating response. The aim was to try to research the main areas of displacement in a degree of depth rather than to spend a lot of time travelling to multiple locations.

An initial visit was made to Juba to assess the current situation; identify sites for the research; meet with possible partners; and identify key existing sources of information. The research team split three ways: to Upper Nile, Unity and Jonglei. A brief visit was also made to the POC sites in Juba. The findings of the research were then shared at a 'Learning and Validation Workshop' held on the 3rd/4th March in Juba. This brought together members of

non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the United Nations (UN) and a number of South Sudanese organisations to discuss the findings and develop the recommendations further. The draft paper was also sent out for peer review.

3. The political and economic context

3.1 *Historical background*

The territory that constitutes the present-day state of South Sudan has seen many violent conflicts and it is the combined impact of these, rather than just the events since December 2013, that will determine the decisions IDPs make about their futures. Although conflicts are often presented in binary terms (north versus south, Dinka versus Nuer, Riek versus Salva), the reality is a complicated web of competing interests and alliances that shift according to the perceived interests of those involved. Moreover, even in times of conflict, a long history of sharing (as well as contesting) resources, of intermarriage, and of assimilation between groups ensures that the ties that bind are rarely totally extinguished. Support to the displaced will need to recognise and build on this.

The splits in the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), that occurred during the long years of war with the Khartoum government, cast their shadow over the independent country and are part of the current conflict. Tensions also existed between different Dinka political factions, and between the Equatorians (themselves by no means always united) and the Dinka. Regional countries have been significant and direct actors in South Sudan's various conflicts and the most recent conflict was no exception – Ugandan military intervention was critical for halting the opposition move towards Juba in the first weeks of the new war, while Sudan provided opportunistic support to various opposition factions. Differences at the negotiating table among regional East African states posed considerable obstacles to efforts to end the latest conflict, though these differences have narrowed of late.

Although the signing of the CPA in 2005 marked the end of the north-south civil war, it left many conflicts unresolved. The negotiations had been a two-way affair between the National Congress Party (NCP) and the SPLM/A. Other groups (e.g. the South Sudan Defence Forces [SSDF] a coalition of armed groups aligned to the government in Khartoum, which had significant strength) were excluded, as was civil society. As a result, the agreement reflected the narrow interests of the two main parties but left much else unaddressed. The focus on the north-south axis glossed over many issues within the south, including the need for accountability and national reconciliation. The Juba Declaration of 2006 brought the SSDF into the SPLA – and was a major contribution to reducing fighting in the south – but the absorption of these rebel groups into the SPLA created a bloated force that never really developed an identity as a national army.

3.2 *International assistance*

The core delivery system for humanitarian assistance during the civil war was Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS), a tripartite agreement signed in 1989 between the UN, the Government of Sudan and the SPLM for negotiated access to those in need living under each group's areas of control. One criticism of this arrangement has been that it built up a culture of entitlement among the rebels, who came to expect that international aid would provide humanitarian assistance, health and education to the people of South Sudan while the SPLA

fought the war. The implicit international recognition of the southern rebel movement and the privileging of access to populations in need over other concerns – such as the protection of civilians or ensuring aid was not diverted for other purposes – set a precedent whereby the SPLM (and now the South Sudanese government) did not expect to be challenged on its standards by international donors or aid agencies.

Following the CPA, humanitarian assistance was superseded by a rush to try and build a western-style state that conformed to the ideals of liberal peacebuilding.⁴ There was a failure to recognise the limits of what could be achieved through formal institutions, or to acknowledge that a state had always existed in what was now South Sudan – but in a very different form. From the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium onwards, a subsistence economy had been overlain with an authoritarian system dependent on external rents (initially subventions from the colonial authorities, then later from Khartoum) and on a degree of co-option of local, usually ethnically-defined, constituencies through networks of patronage. After the CPA this continued, with oil now becoming the source of external funding. Patronage continued, along with massive corruption. Following the logic of the OLS days, the government continued to expect donors to provide health, education and humanitarian assistance for its people while it spent its considerable oil revenues on a bloated military. Meanwhile, the number of people needing food assistance was going up even before the crisis, and by mid-2014 was estimated at nearly 4 million.⁵

3.3 The violence of December 2013

Although largely ignored by international actors there were, as the African Union Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan (AUCISS) report notes, “indications as early as 2009 that all was not well, and that differences within the party [SPLM] portended violence”.⁶ The overriding priority of ensuring that the referendum on southern Sudanese secession took place meant that the façade of party unity was maintained but the differences were never really resolved and the tensions increased after independence. The loss of virtually all government revenue due to the 2012 shut down of oil production, squeezed the government’s patronage systems and both new and old fault lines quickly emerged. On 23 July 2013, the President dismissed the Vice-President along with almost the entire Cabinet; he also suspended SPLM General Secretary Pagan Amum for alleged corruption.⁷

There are competing narratives as to the cause of the fighting within the Presidential Guard that broke out in December 2013, although the AUCISS found no evidence of a coup.⁸ What is not disputed is that what started off as a political conflict within the SPLM, quickly acquired an ethnic dimension with the targeting of Nuer in Juba (including many civilians) followed later by heavy fighting across greater Upper Nile and retaliatory killings of Dinka. After the initial phase, the fighting remained largely concentrated in Unity and Upper Nile states and the northern part of Jonglei. For the civilian population of these areas it has meant almost persistent instability, disruptions of their livelihoods, and threats to their safety. Both Malakal and Bentiu changed hands on numerous occasions, with great loss of life and almost complete destruction of the towns. Southern Unity remained stable and in opposition hands until April 2015 when a major government offensive pushed down into Koch, Mayendit, Leer and parts of Panyijar – causing another massive round of displacement. The scale of the violence, including against women and children, has been reported to be of a level not previously seen in South Sudan’s conflicts.⁹ The impact of this in terms of displacement is

explored later in the report but, inevitably, because it is linked to a bitter political conflict, it has become highly politicised.

The AUCISS noted that it was clear that the outbreak of violence in December 2013 was not an isolated event but was rather lodged in structural and institutional factors, including the weakness of the state, the inability of its institutions to mediate conflict, and a crisis of leadership. Many of those interviewed by the AUCISS team believed that the continuing entanglement of the SPLA and the SPLM has meant that political factionalism quickly finds expression in the military, while the fact that politicians use ethnicity to mobilize support means conflict easily spreads into the general population. The failure to address the problems associated with the long civil war and the lack of opportunities for ordinary South Sudanese people have created an environment where it is easy to mobilize dissent, especially among the youth. Ordinary South Sudanese are well aware of this and, not surprisingly, it colours how they feel about possible return.

3.4 The IGAD Peace Process and its aftermath

The peace process led by the East African Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) was subject to endless delays, regional disputes and to violations of multiple agreements on a cessation of hostilities. Finally, on the 26th August 2015, and under significant external pressure, an “Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan” (ARCSS) was signed. This required the parties to share power in a Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU). Violations, however, continued and many deadlines were passed. The President’s announcement, in October 2015, of the creation of 28 states – followed by the appointment of governors – was seen by many in opposition areas as a violation of the agreement and an attempt to create ethnic states and entrench Dinka power and control of resources. It is feared that there will be multiple conflicts over boundaries. Many of those interviewed felt that it undermines the opportunities for building good relations across groups that exist in larger states, and for making governors responsible for keeping peace across a large, multi-ethnic area. The issue is of particular importance for the Shilluk, who feel robbed of, what they see as, their ancestral home of Malakal and traditional land east of the Nile and south of the Sobat. In other areas, however, the move has been popular – which means any decision made by the government on the future number of states will now be highly problematic. In January 2016, IGAD stated its concern that the decree on 28 states was inconsistent with the terms of ARCSS and urged the parties to suspend further action on implementing the operationalization of new states until an inclusive, participatory National Boundary Commission comprising all parties to ARCSS reviewed the proposed states and their boundaries.¹⁰

Meanwhile, there has been an extension of conflict into other parts of South Sudan which were previously unaffected. In December 2015, the whole area of Ezo and Tambura in Western Equatoria state was depopulated, with some 10,000 people displaced, either into the deep bush or neighbouring Central African Republic and Democratic Republic of Congo. There was also fighting in the state capital, Yambio, leading to approximately 7,000 civilians seeking shelter at the compound of an NGO (with the UNMISS providing perimeter security). In February, the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC) reported continued fighting in Mundri between SPLA and opposition forces.¹¹ Some of the local self-defence groups, the Arrow Boys, were reported to have joined the SPLM/A-IO. Eastern Equatoria state has also seen recent conflict

with, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), some 4,000 South Sudanese fleeing their homes following clashes between government and opposition forces. Likewise, Central Equatoria state has been affected by the broader tensions. Although the transition, in December 2015, from long-time governor Clement Wani Konga to Juma Ali Malou was managed peacefully, there has been fighting and consequent displacement in Lainya, Juba and Magwi counties. In September 2015, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (ICP) report noted a large deterioration in food security in the Greater Equatoria region due to a combination of market disruption, economic downturn, insecurity and localized crop failures.¹² Meanwhile, in Northern Bahr el-Ghazal the early defection to the opposition of SPLA commander Dau Aturjong has led to conflict, while Warrap, which was always a state with internal divisions, now faces a power vacuum. In Western Bahr el-Ghazal, the old conflict lines from the north-south civil war have re-emerged with conflict between the government and the Fertit. Thus, while this report has concentrated on the three areas of Upper Nile, Unity and Jonglei, it is clear that insecurity leading to displacement is a wider problem, and looks quite likely to get worse. More research is needed into these other areas, particularly the impact of the conflicts in Western Equatoria and Western Bahr el-Ghazal.

3.5 The economic situation

Adding to South Sudan's problems and greatly reducing the room for political manoeuvre is the dire economic situation. The steep fall in oil prices, on top of the closure of all the Unity state oil fields because of the conflict, has wiped out most of the country's revenue. The recent government decision to end the fixed exchange rate and allow the South Sudan Pound (SSP) to float, although necessary to eliminate distortions and end the massive opportunities for corruption, effectively devalued the currency overnight with the official rate moving from the previous SSP/USD 2.96 to 18.5, the then going rate in the parallel 'black' market. Since then the value of the SSP has fallen further, with rates in February 2016 standing at more than 30 to the USD. A recent World Food Programme (WFP) working paper notes how the urban poor and the most vulnerable populations in rural areas that are highly dependent on markets have witnessed continued decline in their purchasing power.¹³ The September Integrated Food Security (IPC) report noted that "economic downturn has resulted in record high food prices (up to 150% compared to average) which has significantly affected the purchasing power of households across the country with significant effects being felt in Greater Bahr el-Ghazal States and the urban-poor population".¹⁴ Unless there is implementation of the peace agreement and the formation of a genuine TGoNU, it is unlikely that this economic situation can be addressed and a vicious cycle of currency depreciation and soaring import prices could ensue. According to the WFP, prices of staple cereals in the Greater Bahr el-Ghazal and Greater Upper Nile Regions are already significantly elevated.¹⁵ Increased insecurity in areas such as Western Equatoria state that have traditionally been the breadbasket of South Sudan will intensify the problem.

3.6 Future scenarios

It is hard to predict the future. The best-case scenario is that security gradually improves, giving people the option to rebuild their lives. Perhaps more likely is that the current security situation – not good but certainly more stable than at the height of the war – holds until some event once again destabilizes the country. The risk is that South Sudan becomes more unstable as localised deteriorations in security, as are currently occurring in a number of areas, build to a situation where the government controls less and less of its territory. Triggers

that might lead to a worsening of security include: the cumulative impact of economic stress; delays and obstacles in the implementation of the peace agreement; an incident with rival security forces in Juba or elsewhere; the failure to satisfactorily resolve the conflict over the President's decision to move from 10 to 28 states; and the competition created by the next round of elections, scheduled for 60 days before the end of the 30 month Transition Period.¹⁶

4. Patterns of displacement and mobility

A huge number of people in South Sudan have been displaced and the decisions they make about future settlement will have wide implications. But those decisions are impossible for them, or anyone else, to predict, given the uncertainty of the political situation. Rather than seeking to forecast future movements, therefore, this section assembles historical evidence and the findings of this study to describe how conflict, coercion and ecological change have driven displacement in South Sudan.¹⁷ It shows how displacement is shaped by, and disrupts, underlying patterns of mobility (such as pastoralist, labour or nuptial migration) and suggests some of the effects of these patterns on families, culture, social and economic life. It illustrates this with material from Bor, Twic East and Duk counties.

South Sudanese historical experience is often presented as a pattern of war and displacement followed by peace agreements and officially supported return and reintegration. Displacement has been seen as a problem to be resolved by returns from alien places of displacement to authentic places of origin. Returns validated peace agreements. Reintegration was a process whereby a war-shattered community reconstituted past relationships, past settlement and housing patterns, and past economic systems. But displacement does not have neat beginnings and endings, and the political utility of return for peace agreement signatories meant that it was often overemphasized. The 'pasts' that reintegration invoked sometimes no longer existed, except as ideals. Internationally, policy models based on return, reintegration and reconstruction were gradually replaced with models that began with the role of mobility in conflict and development, and this might provide a more useful understanding of displacement in South Sudan's current situation of unresolved conflict.

4.1 Historical movements

Displacement and government coercion: the 1930s

Nuer resistance to government taxation led, in 1928, to a massive 'pacification' assault on the Nuer areas of Jonglei. After pacification, the Anglo-Egyptian colonial authorities established a 'no-man's-land' between Nuer and Dinka people – some of whom had participated in the pacification schemes – and ordered Nuer people to concentrate settlement in villages. This experiment in state-led displacement to ethnic enclaves was unsuccessful. Some Dinka groups in predominantly Nuer areas refused 'repatriation' to Dinka areas. Animal diseases – possibly caused by population concentration – and flooding devastated these forcibly segregated communities and the 'no-man's-land' was abolished in 1936. The same policy was also followed in other parts of southern Sudan, displacing people from forests and riverbanks to villages on newly built roads, with the aim of simplifying surveillance and administration.¹⁸

Displacement and ecological change: the 1960s

Causes and patterns of displacement were different in the 1960s. Floods in the Bahr al-Jebel caused a major expansion of swamps, killing cows and pushing many people into

displacement. The predominantly Dinka population living near the river were displaced into drier areas inland. This movement had many implications:

- **Inter-ethnic relationships:** Some Dinka people sought refuge from the floods in the Lou Nuer areas to the east. Lou Nuer people, who had historically used the *toic* in predominantly Dinka Duk areas, began to use the expanding Gaawar Nuer *toic*, to the north, in a process that sometimes created ethnic tensions.¹⁹
- **Economic relationships:** Restocking strategies changed the way people worked. Some Dinka people started a dried fish trade. Others cultivated maize, which they traded for cattle in food-insecure Mundari areas of Central Equatoria. People moved to work in Bor and to the agricultural schemes of northern Upper Nile or northern Sudan, or to the cities of northern Sudan. Returning migrants used wages to buy cattle.
- **Social relationships:** Dinka women married into cattle-rich groups in Bahr al-Ghazal and in Nuer areas. Bridewealth systems redistributed Nuer cattle into Dinka areas.²⁰

A similar policy was initiated after 1966, when the Khartoum government settled people in ‘peace villages’ as part of a counter-insurgency strategy. About 50,000 people were settled in 1966, but they only received rations until their first crops. They were expected to inform on rebels. The villages saw several serious disease outbreaks.²¹

Displacement and conflict: South Sudan’s second civil war

Sudan’s civil wars displaced millions of people and created one of the world’s biggest displacement crises. Central government policies depopulated areas around oilfields and around roads. Other conflicts, such as the splits in the SPLA and the inter-communal conflicts that arose out of these splits, also caused massive displacement. In 1991, Riek Machar’s breakaway faction of the SPLA attacked the predominantly Dinka area of Greater Bor. Most Bor people were displaced, and most Bor cattle were lost. Riek Machar’s army contained many Nuer civilians and the ethnic dimension of the attack meant that relationships between the intermarried, bilingual communities on the Dinka-Nuer borderlands were thoroughly undermined. Lou Nuer people, who live in a territory with no all-season watercourses, were cut off from the Dinka swampy dry season pastures, or *toics*, which they had previously used. The resulting food crisis fuelled wider conflicts.

Displacement pushed many people towards the harsh labour markets of northern Sudan, and consequently South Sudanese swelled the populations of northern towns. Dinka people were also pushed towards pastures in Bahr el-Ghazal and Equatoria. Restocking strategies pushed people towards the cash economy, and towards markets and cities in Sudan, southern Sudan and East Africa. Restocking strategies were also ‘displaced’ – Dinka people acquired shorthorn East African cattle and herded them in predominantly agrarian areas of Equatoria, sometimes undermining inter-communal relationships. For other ethnic groups, raiding – rather than markets – shaped restocking. The rise of raiding as an adjunct means of production created new patterns of mobility for young men involved in the raiding system.

4.2 Intersecting patterns of displacement and mobility

The main drivers of displacement – state coercion, war and ecological crisis – intersect with each other and are also shaped by – and disrupt – patterns of mobility, including pastoralist, labour and nuptial migration, urbanization and shifting densities of settlement. These patterns

of mobility all have long histories – but they are still part of today’s experience. Looking at how these patterns of mobility are playing out today may help outsiders to understand how people will move and settle in the near future – and to devise better responses to these movements.

Pastoralist migration

People in South Sudan’s flood plains are very mobile, moving from wet season homesteads to dry season pastures. Conflict is configured around dry seasons – when armies can move – and around settlements – which armies can capture. These patterns of mobility and conflict shape displacement – historically and today – with the first refuge being the rivers and *toics*. For example, several thousand people were displaced from Maar, in Pakeer payam, Twic East county, Jonglei, in November 2015 after a cattle raid that local officials attributed to a group of Nuer attackers. Many people went to a displacement camp in Mingkaman on the west bank of the Nile but the majority went to islands in the swamp. In January 2016, some of these displaced people returned – but some left their children in the swamp for protection and the local education officer despatched local chiefs to encourage their enrolment back in Maar.²²

For the past few decades, Lou Nuer access to pastures in the Dinka area of Duk county has been politicized by wider conflicts. In April 2014, the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army-In Opposition (SPLM/A-IO), retreating from an attack on Bor, went through Duk to outflank the SPLA, which had captured the Nuer county headquarters of Ayod and Waat. The SPLM/A-IO had many Lou Nuer elements, and they sacked Duk county, displacing almost the entire population. In November 2015, Lou emissaries came to Duk to ask if they could resume access.²³ As the dry season began, young Lou Nuer cattle keepers surrendered weapons to police and went to the Duk *toic*. They left older people and children sleeping in temporary shelters in places like Duk Pawiel, where they could get food aid and – according to a local official – their families could act as a guarantee of the Lou Nuer youth’s good behaviour while in Duk county.²⁴

Pastoralist migration imposes periodic separations between young men and women (who follow livestock to dry season pastures) and older people and children (who stay at home at the farm/wet season settlement as long as they can). Separations also shape the generational division of labour – for example, young people from pastoralist communities have relatively little participation in cultivation. These separations are now being lengthened and intensified, changing the relationships between young and old, male and female.

Nuptial migration

Most societies of the flood plains have incest prohibitions on marriage between two people who share a great-great-great-great-grandparent. Women have to leave their homes and live with their husbands. These systems mean that women play an inconspicuous but vital role in mobility and in keeping different societies connected – bridewealth systems mean that their marriages and the marriages of their kin bring the economic interests of distantly-related families together. Conflict makes it more likely for women to move. Daughters of cattle-less families marry in distant, cattle-rich areas. Reconciliation can also prompt nuptial migration: where neighbouring communities have been at odds, the revival of intermarriage signifies a political shift towards communal peace. Where markets in cattle develop, bridewealth inflation can be significant. Bridewealth inflation puts pressure on young women to marry in accordance with family economic interests. All of these tendencies, which deeply influence the course of women’s lives, exist in peacetime; but war intensifies them.

Labour migration

Before the first civil war, families restocked lost cattle through grain cultivation and exchange, or bridewealth. Since then, labour migration has been a key element of restocking. Labour migration used to take people to plantations and towns in northern Sudan and there is some evidence that a refugee South Sudanese workforce is again being reconstituted in Sudan. But people also travel to the labour markets of South Sudanese and East African towns to find work. In communities that have suffered major losses of cattle or other resources, labour migration may increase.

Movement towards markets

Lou Nuer people mostly live in rebel-controlled territory, and food security there has been undermined by conflict and poor harvests. Market access is also a component of food security in Jonglei. A 2009 study found that 59 per cent of dietary energy consumption in Jonglei was purchased, although only 37 per cent of Jonglei households had used cash in the past seven days.²⁵ The cash crunch has probably been exacerbated by the conflict, SSP devaluation, inflation, crop failure and the drought Jonglei has experienced since 2013. It seems likely that levels of liquidity in rebel-held areas have declined. A cattle-market official in Akobo said in January 2016 that only one cow had been sold in the past month. A trader from Wuror said in February 2016 that there was almost no market for cattle there. Cattle sales in Awerial, in contrast, were buoyant, with up to 100 per week.

Markets and access to food are unevenly distributed in South Sudan. People in the cash-poor hinterlands, therefore, have to move towards markets in order to sell cows and buy food. In January and February 2016, Lou Nuer pastoralists were moving to Duk to sell cattle to survive. Since the huge cattle raids of the 2009-2013 period, there has been very little cattle trade in the Nuer hinterland of Jonglei – the state has one of the largest cattle populations in South Sudan, and one of the smallest number of cattle markets.²⁶ This uneven access to markets may undermine peaceful relationships, as the circulation of money (in areas with markets) is delinked from the circulation of cattle (in areas where the cattle economy has been charged up by looting and rustling).

Urbanization

Census data on urbanization in South Sudan found that the urban population increased from two per cent of total population in 1956 to 17 per cent in 2008.²⁷ South Sudan has had one of the world's fastest urbanization rates, with an average increase of 5.05 per cent in the years 2005-2010 compared to 3.55 for Africa as a whole.²⁸ Even where internally displaced people have fled towns, they tend to go to other (albeit smaller) towns rather than to the countryside. Akobo town, for example, has had an influx of people, most of whom have been displaced from towns such as Bor, Juba, Bentiu and Malakal. SPLM/A-IO officials there believe that it is unlikely that these people will move to rural areas. In 2013, many displaced people reported that they travelled away from their homes in vehicles, rather than on foot as they had done in 1991. One group of chiefs displaced to Panyang payam, Poktap town, Duk county, estimated that less than a quarter of their population was in rural areas, and most of this rural population was partially dependent on relief food from Poktap.

How these patterns of mobility affect everyday life

War, coercion and environmental problems have disrupted the movements of many of South Sudan's very mobile societies, with deep effects on family, culture, society and economic life.

Where people can go and with whom they can stay are shaped by conflict, as is seen in the next section. War has seen the rapid mobilisation of boys and young men for fighting in regular armies and local defence and raiding groups, and this has altered relations between old and young. These effects will need to be understood and addressed by future programmes.

5. Overview of findings from the field research

The past patterns described in the previous section have continued to influence responses to the current conflict, even as the conflict itself has disrupted and changed some of these patterns. While the local patterns of conflict, and of humanitarian needs and response, differed in every location visited, the broader political dynamic that began with the December 2013 fighting repeatedly forced itself onto local inter-communal dynamics and divisions. The overwhelming need for peace at the national level as an absolute prerequisite for recovery, return and stability for conflict-affected citizens was regularly stressed. Yet, at the same time, confidence in the current peace agreement was low. Those interviewed repeatedly referred to the seeming reluctance with which the agreement was signed and the delays in its implementation. The decree on the move to 28 states has further complicated the issue: while in Nuer and Shilluk areas it was seen both as something that would increase conflict and as a sign of bad faith with respect to the power-sharing arrangements made under the agreement, in Dinka areas it was often welcomed. Similarly, the level of trust in government varied widely, based primarily on the ethnicity of the population and their tribe's relationship with either the SPLA or SPLM/A-IO. Although the conflict has led in some areas to the hardening of ethnic identities at the expense of shared South Sudanese identities, there still seems to be room to address issues of local peace-building. There are also places where solidarity exists across ethnic boundaries, especially in areas where these have always been fluid. Many people spoke of their commitment to peace.

5.1 Local dynamics

The conflict has played out in different ways in different places, although everywhere the levels and types of violence were seen as more brutal – with more consistent targeting of women, children and the elderly – than in past wars. In Upper Nile, Malakal town has been attacked on at least 12 occasions, and switched hands 9 times. Each round of fighting has led to different inflows/outflows of civilians to the Malakal POC site, depending on the ethnicity and alliances of the invading or occupying force. One veteran humanitarian worker described Malakal as the most difficult environment he'd seen in 25 years of humanitarian work, due to the constantly shifting context and the wild swings in the safety and security of different groups of civilians.²⁹ While the Shilluk involvement in the civil war is overshadowed by the larger Dinka-Nuer narrative, it is a major factor in the conflict dynamics in this area and has led to greater organisation and cohesion among the Shilluk, who are fighting more for a local agenda – the ownership and control of what they perceive as their traditional lands including Malakal town – than a national political agenda.

Unity has suffered massively in the fighting – a recent UN report, which looked at both government and opposition controlled areas, described the situation as “shocking” and outlined the urgent need for “extraordinary levels of humanitarian assistance”.³⁰ Bentiu, like Malakal, is a town that changed hands on numerous occasions and has been largely destroyed in the process. The extent of the abuse against civilians has led to a pervasive climate of fear that will take a long time to shift. Many IDPs in Unity believed they had been deliberately driven off their

lands so they could not support the SPLM/A-IO and this led to a strong narrative of the need for justice, with interviewees speaking of their fear of further rounds of violence unless those who had ordered the killings were brought to trial. Although around 20,000 IDPs are registered in Bentiu town, these are mainly women and children from Mayom county who have come in search of food, with just a few coming in from other locations.³¹ Some women and children also move between the POC site and Bentiu on a daily basis but do not stay the night in town. Men, unless they are linked to government and therefore have a degree of protection, do not leave the POC site. There was also a notable difference between counties such as Leer and Koch – which saw the brunt of the SPLA offensive, and consequently massive displacement and disruption to social structures – and Panyijar county, in the far south, which escaped the worst of the violence and remained much more cohesive.

In contrast, Jonglei is shaped by the fact it has not seen much peace since the CPA was signed in 2005, and today there is still more than one conflict in the state – with the now low-level conflict between the government and the SPLM/A-IO perhaps not the most destructive of them. Control of Bor shifted between the SPLM/A-IO and the government several times at the start of the current conflict, but since government forces re-established their hold on the town in early 2014 it has been slowly recovering. Akobo is different again as it lies on the Ethiopian border and has become something of a refuge for displaced Nuer – a place from which they can escape across the river if necessary. Duk county, on the other hand, was not affected by the current conflict until April 2013. Its population is largely bilingual in Nuer and Dinka, and this has proved a resource for people trying to overcome conflict: Duk has become a place of exchange and trade between a number of Nuer and Dinka communities.

5.2 Complex patterns of displacement

The patterns of movement have been complex in all areas and many people are now facing protracted displacement, a finding confirmed by other studies.³² For some of those interviewed, this was not the first time they had been displaced, but rather part of a long personal history of dislocation. Movements are hard to summarize but, as an example, the list below gives an indication of the different pathways taken in Jonglei since 2013:

- Bor people have moved to swamps, Mingkaman, Juba and East African cities. Some have moved with cattle to Equatorian pastures. Their movement was triggered by the SPLM/A-IO attack on Bor.
- Twic people have followed similar patterns to those of Bor. Their movements were triggered by a Murle attack in November 2013.
- Duk people have moved their cattle to Twic. Their movements were triggered by attacks from a routed SPLM/A-IO in April 2014.
- People from Duk county's predominantly Nuer payam of Panyang moved to Poktap, hitherto a predominantly Dinka town in the county. Their movement was triggered by internal conflicts over chiefship, which began in 2011 but were dramatically politicized by the December 2013 conflict.
- People from Lou Nuer areas of Uror and Gaawar Nuer areas of Ayod have been moving to Duk county since the government and the SPLM/A-IO signed a peace deal in August 2015. Their moves are linked to searches for food and markets, after two years of very poor harvests.

- People are moving to Akobo because of food crises in Lou Nuer areas. Akobo has a functioning supply line to Ethiopia, but no lorries to move food inland. In addition, Nuer urban populations fleeing targeted killings have moved there; and some Shilluk and Pigi Dinka groups.
- Akobo was, until the 1980s, a predominantly Anuak town. Since then, Anuak people have been displaced from the town to Ethiopia as a result of ethnic tensions. Two violent incidents in 2015 led nearly all of them to leave.
- In Greater Bor, many people are still moving to swamps and islands. A payam official in Twic East county believed that more people had moved to islands than had moved to the IDP settlement at Mingkaman.

Patterns are equally complex in Unity. At the outbreak of violence in Bentiu and Rubkona, some people fled to the Bentiu POC site. However, many others fled south to Koch, Leer and Mayendit counties, believing the fighting would not last long and they would soon be able to return home. As the conflict moved back and forth across the state over the following two years they fled multiple times, fleeing bullets and losing family members in the process. As soon as there was a little stability, some people made further journeys in an attempt to find relatives that had been lost in the flight. When, in April 2015, a major SPLA offensive was launched, driving south to Riek Machar's home area of Leer, many initially fled to neighbouring islands or to the forest, hiding out in the hopes of being able to go back. Some went back home briefly under cover of darkness to collect the fishing nets and other vital assets that enabled their survival. The next six months saw further attacks punctuated by periods of calm, during which a few tried to go home only to flee again as the next attack came in. Some came directly south to Panyijar but many did the journey in stages, resting on the islands for weeks at a time. The lucky few had access to canoes, most went by foot wading in water that was sometimes neck-high, fashioning basic boats out of branches and plastic sheeting to carry their children and few possessions. Others put their children on their shoulders. They had very little to eat, surviving on what fish they could catch and the ground roots of water lilies. By December 2015, the REACH project estimated there were between 6,000 and 10,000 IDPs in the Greater Nyal area, of which between 1,500 and 2,500 were living on the islands.³³ Meanwhile others made their way back north, walking at night, hiding in the day and finally circling round to find ways back into the Bentiu POC site avoiding any as SPLA presence.³⁴

In Upper Nile, the majority of IDPs, with the exception of those in Melut POC site, have also been displaced multiple times during this conflict. The ethnic dimension of the conflict has meant that fighting in and around Malakal has had a backwards and forwards effect on civilian populations in Malakal town and POC site, with Dinka civilians fleeing to the POC site when the SPLM/A-IO attacked Malakal, and Nuer civilians fleeing there when the SPLA counter-attacked. Civilians appear to have been targeted consistently by all forces. Because Shilluk forces – under Johnson Olony – began the war on the side of the SPLA before switching to the SPLM/A-IO, Shilluk civilians have been targeted by both sides at different times. The alternating control of Malakal town has created temporary corridors for Dinka and Nuer IDPs to leave the POC site under the protection of either SPLM/A-IO or SPLA forces and many of those with resources or connections went to Sudan, Juba, Yei, Uganda or Kenya. The majority of those interviewed in Malakal POC site were residents of the town prior to the fighting and they appeared to want to remain in the POC site because they intend to return to Malakal town. The displaced populations in Melut tended to be more settled, with fewer

security concerns. Overall in Upper Nile, the shifting alliances and waves of fighting have led to a gradual separation of the displaced population by ethnic group – displaced Dinka are mostly now in Dinka lands and displaced Shilluk mostly in Shilluk lands, although claims to land ownership are highly controversial.

5.3 Solidarity, agency and social change

Social networks are one of the main mechanisms by which South Sudanese people survive protracted displacement. Even households in the lowest income categories are hosting displaced people. In contrast to the Bentiu POC site, IDPs in Nyal were not even visible because everyone had been integrated into the community. The response has been extraordinary. IDPs spoke of incredible acts of generosity: people gave them a place to stay, shared their kitchens, found food, clothes, shoes. Some had relatives in Nyal but many said they knew no one.³⁵ They came with nothing, desperately hungry, wet and tired, and people just took them in. Both IDPs and the host community said simply that this was “Nuer culture” and saw it as in no way exceptional; agency staff members report similar generosity in Ganyiel. The research in Jonglei also showed how many people use kinship networks to get accommodation and that displaced people not on ration registers get food from neighbours.

Both individuals and communities also continue to find ways to take some control of their situation. Some of the women interviewed in Bentiu POC site had walked for days to find lost children. Communities in many locations were taking responsibility for their own security needs by mobilizing local self-defence forces or planning for defensive village communal structures. In Juba POC 3, local ‘neighbourhood watch’ groups worked with the UN Police (UNPOL) to maintain the security of the camp.

But society is also seeing changes. The less mobile elements of pastoralist families now sometimes stay under plastic sheeting in a town, eating relief food that arrives for four or five months a year and supporting people in their areas of origin and in dry season pastures. Education is disrupted by displacement and impoverishment. A 2015 study of 1,525 people in six states in South Sudan found that 41 per cent reported symptoms consistent with post-traumatic stress disorder. Rates were higher for men than for women, and higher among people currently living in displacement.³⁶ Other studies have reported a high prevalence of sexual violence, often aggravated by unforgettable cruelties.³⁷ The war has also seen the rapid mobilization of boys and young men by regular armies as well as local defence and raiding groups. Most receive no pay and survive by foraging and looting. Youth militarization is unevenly spread among different ethnic communities and this may complicate inter-communal relationships. In some area of Jonglei, interviewees reported an increase in levels of intra-communal violence, and this has also been seen clearly in Malakal POC site.

5.4 The impact of the conflict on livelihoods

The impact of the conflict on food security has been severe, especially in Unity and Upper Nile states. According to the IPC figures, an estimated 30,000 people are at the “catastrophe” level of need and require urgent humanitarian assistance.³⁸ These are mainly in Leer, Guit, Koch and Mayendit counties in Unity state, with those who fled to the bush between April and June 2015 being most affected. IDPs from all areas reported having lost everything when they fled, including livestock, and there were repeated requests in all locations for NGOs to provide seeds and tools for cultivation and nets and canoes for fishing. Many displaced interviewees said they were not cultivating, citing insecurity and lack of access to land. Even where people

could cultivate, most recent harvests had been poor. General food distributions do not cover all of people's needs and logistical, security and funding challenges mean they have been very irregular; they are enough of an incentive to bring people from food insecure areas to distribution points but not enough to encourage dependency. Many people depend on a wide range of food sources: eating wild foods, selling assets, deepening dependence on kinship, or seeking survival work – such as wood collection – in order to make up food deficits. There were also anecdotal reports of the spread of prostitution in IDP settlements.

While trade was a significant economic activity and a survival mechanism, its impact and importance varied widely. Communities on the border of neighbouring countries benefitted from active trade routes and the movement of people, much more so than those in the interior. Some international agencies promote market agriculture but they do not always take account of the lack of liquidity in local markets. Uneven commercialization of agriculture may accentuate cultural and social differences. In Melut and particularly Paloich, there were well-stocked markets and traders and goods from both Sudan and Ethiopia. Official river access between Malakal POC site and Wau Shilluk was re-opened by the SPLA in October 2015, which has facilitated trade and the movement of people (though this was reportedly shut down again by SPLA in mid-February).³⁹ Akobo is now an important SPLM/A-IO town with a market that is a destination for Ethiopian imports. The area has no lorries to move goods inland and so the presence of commodities and relief goods mean that it attracts hungry people from areas to the west. In southern Unity, the government has blocked traders from accessing Juba and a new route has opened up to Duk county, via Mayen. Relations between Duk and this part of Unity state are strong, with much intermarriage and many people speaking both Nuer and Dinka. Duk traders have access to Juba and bring up goods that are then taken on to Nyal. But trade is conducted discreetly and it is not clear how much it could be extended without it being interrupted. The journey across to Duk takes three days in each direction and the small size of canoes limits what can be brought. It is, inevitably given the distances involved, an expensive route but it keeps the market stocked with essentials. The traders are also part of the local community and never left the town when it was attacked (some, indeed, took up arms to defend it), so they could supply food faster than NGOs. Similarly it is reported that trade has opened up from Adok (Leer County) to Mayen and Duk.⁴⁰ One notable development in Malakal POC site and Wau Shilluk is the emergence of five Shilluk-owned money transfer companies, which have been formed since the start of the conflict and cater primarily to the Shilluk community. It was impossible to estimate the size of these money flows, but one company estimated that they handled between 30-80 customers on a slow day in Wau Shilluk. No similar developments were found in other areas and instead people used travellers going to Juba to access the systems there. Common to all areas is the impact of a weak South Sudanese economy and a collapsing independent currency, which is significantly undercutting economic options and having a negative impact, both on markets and the potential for economic survival and recovery. How well the above strategies can continue if this decline is not arrested remains to be seen.

The cattle trade displays great regional unevenness, of which this report provides only a glimpse. Some areas in Jonglei reported few cattle losses; others (both in Jonglei and Unity) reported that cattle losses preceded the current conflict. In Jonglei, losses were attributed to the widespread social crisis in the floodplains that led to the emergence of mass looting, in Unity to raiding from Lakes. In Bor, interviewees reported rapid restocking from Ugandan markets. Others planned to restock through cultivation and bridewealth. Interviewees in Bor

also believed that other groups in Jonglei would probably restock through raiding. The lack of liquidity and demand in SPLM/A-IO areas was depressing sales, although Nuer IDPs who left savings in banks in Juba are investing them in cattle. Traders coming in from Sudan were accepting payments for goods in SSP and immediately using these to purchase cattle locally, which they then sold at a considerable profit in Sudan.

5.5 Humanitarian response

Most South Sudanese interviewed expect that international assistance will be the main source of relief and services in the near term – there is little expectation of government provision. The scale of need is enormous. The 2016 South Sudan Humanitarian Response Plan requests \$1.3 billion for 114 humanitarian partners to respond to these needs.⁴¹ However, the evidence suggests that there is little risk of dependency emerging. For example, while WFP rations were certainly valued – people walked for hours to register – rations were too little and arrived too infrequently to be a major source of food. While this finding is in keeping with other studies, in the biggest IDP settlements in Jonglei humanitarian actors were citing the fear of relief dependency as a reason for seeking to limit entitlement and push people towards ‘development programmes’.⁴²

The presence of the UN mission and existence of the POC sites has created an important but complicated dynamic that has not been a factor in South Sudan’s previous conflicts. The opening of the POC sites in Malakal, Bentiu, Juba and elsewhere has undoubtedly saved many lives but the sites are fraught with problems. The situation for IDPs in the Malakal POC site was by far the most difficult of any location visited in Upper Nile. Yet despite overcrowding, fire hazards and internal tensions, the POC site does offer some protection, and access to some services and to food aid. The 17th/18th February fighting in the POC site demonstrates both its current limitations and the real threat facing Nuer and Shilluk IDPs from SPLA soldiers outside.⁴³ This is reinforced by regular reports of arrests, harassment, kidnappings or killings in Malakal town, or en route between Malakal POC site and the port. Similar difficulties were seen in Bentiu. Despite the efforts of UNPOL, which were praised, no authority has a mandate to detain, try or sanction offenders and this has resulted in a situation where there is no effective deterrent against gangs. Residents do not feel safe and say they needed to be in their tukuls by 8pm. In Juba POC 3 by contrast, even women living on their own said they felt safe. It was not entirely clear why this was so but it was notable that in Malakal and Bentiu there was little programming for teenagers, nor schooling beyond primary, and this contributed to a range of problems (crime, fighting, drinking, the breakdown of authority) that was fuelled in part by the large number of idle, angry youth. Juba had better provision and also seemed to have developed better local security teams that worked effectively with UNPOL.

Women continue to face problems when leaving the camps to collect firewood, particularly as the distances required are growing longer as firewood supplies are being depleted closer to camps. The stories were most harrowing in Malakal and Bentiu POC sites, although the situation in Bentiu had recently improved greatly due to a change in the SPLA Divisional Commander, but similar difficulties face women in other areas. UN-led firewood patrols have begun in Malakal but these are not yet effective.

In Upper Nile there were some worrying divisions within the humanitarian community, which several NGO workers ascribed to a difficult funding environment in which NGOs were competing for the same funding from a small set of donors, who themselves have had shifting priorities. There were also splits on the administration of the POC sites and on the level and

type of threats being faced by different IDP communities, with an impression that UNMISS and some UN agencies were actively working to close the POC sites and that donor funding was increasingly lining up behind this goal. UNMISS is currently undertaking a strategic review of the POC sites.

Some agencies have developed quite complex, extempore programmes that aim to meet needs as they emerge. The US-funded Jonglei Food Security Programme, for example, provides food distribution, local savings and insurance schemes, small ruminant loans and other responses tailored to local conditions. The programme has a large, locally recruited staff and this enhances understanding of local needs. In Nyal, Unity state, the DFID-funded Mercy Corps cash transfer programme, which supports traders as well as giving cash transfers, seems to have been effective in supporting the local economy and in reaching those most in need. It was notable how beneficiaries spoken to used part of this assistance to invest in their long term livelihood security (for example, buying a goat or keeping children in school) even when this meant they had to undertake arduous and sometimes risky strategies, such as firewood collection, to meet their day-to-day needs.

Finally, in SPLM/A-IO held areas and many other remote places, the only liquidity in the economy comes from salaries paid by relief agencies. The already difficult working environment they face will be made more so by the restrictive NGO Act (2016), which now regulates these organisations.⁴⁴ The politicization of recruitment – already a feature in many places – is likely to deepen.

5.6 Options for return

In all the areas visited during this research, the point was made repeatedly that IDPs had little-to-no information about the actual security situation in their home areas. People's primary source of information was radio (Radio Tamazuj was mentioned consistently as the station of choice, along with the BBC and VoA, and in some locations Radio Miraya). The security updates people received were appreciated but there were requests for more regular information about specific places to be integrated into radio programming in order to inform decision-making. Dinka IDPs in the Melut area expressed trust in the government and assumed that they would return to their home areas when the government informed them it was safe, but this was not the case in other areas. For Nuer and Shilluk in Malakal and the west bank, their primary condition for return was the withdrawal of SPLA troops from Malakal town, followed by the formation of the transitional government and deployment of SPLM/A-IO forces to Malakal.⁴⁵ In both Malakal and Bentiu, the massive destruction that has taken place means return will be a multi-year process even if the peace agreement holds. In Jonglei, officials in SPLM/A-IO and government areas both advocated returns to rural areas. Officials in Bor and Duk said that state policy on displacement was to provide adequate security in rural areas so that people would return, and to advocate for support for reintegration from NGOs. In Akobo, an official stated that there was no current policy on returns, but rural people will need to return to rural areas if they cannot find jobs in towns. Officials in Akobo were not aware of the 2015 South Sudan Resettlement Strategy published by the SPLM/A-IO's Relief Organization for South Sudan, which envisages urban as well as rural support for livelihoods for returnees.⁴⁶

Many interviewees in Jonglei said that they believed that people would return to rural areas and rural settlement patterns would become more concentrated, for two reasons. First, local governments see agriculture as a means of raising revenue in a situation where oil revenues are now very little. Second, people expect services, and denser settlements will simplify service

delivery. One group of chiefs said that old settlement patterns – of scattered homesteads surrounded by small cultivation plots – would be replaced by denser settlements at the centre of communal farms, strung out in a defensive line, to protect people from the raiding that is a result of the deep social crisis in the flood plains. Communal farming, they said, will require plot demarcation and the beginning of individual ownership of land. But reversing urbanization is very unusual in global experience and historical precedents are not encouraging (see earlier section on historical movements). Government officials in Jonglei who discussed plans for return argued for local defence forces and also contended that scattered homesteads should be replaced by villages that could defensively concentrate the rural population. Some IDPs, however, expressed scepticism about policies that might return them prematurely to places still caught up in violence.

6. Conclusions

What the people of South Sudan need most is peace. Only this will enable them to rebuild their lives in a sustainable way. Humanitarian assistance can address only some of the many issues they face. Yet the future remains profoundly uncertain and there is little confidence among IDP populations in the current peace agreement. Displacement is therefore likely to be protracted, and some people will probably face multiple moves. Furthermore, the conflict has played out differently in different places, feeding into different historical narratives and backdrops; different communities have different perceptions of security and security providers. This means that humanitarian assistance will not only be needed for a long time to come but also will have to be developed in a way that is both locally appropriate and highly flexible.

Much of what we found is not new. Earlier research, both in South Sudan and globally, thus helps shape our recommendations. A recent Overseas Development Institute study found that “in two-thirds of countries monitored for conflict-induced displacement in 2014, at least 50% of IDPs had been displaced for more than three years”. It went on to note: “donors and aid agencies need to guard against generalising about situations of protracted displacement or the needs of displaced people. Situations of displacement are not static events but instead change continuously; they rarely proceed along a predictable path from displacement to stabilisation to return”.⁴⁷ A joint NGO briefing paper issued in 2011 noted that: “South Sudan is a context that challenges normal development paradigms and fits awkwardly in the humanitarian relief–recovery–post-conflict development continuum”.⁴⁸ An Overseas Development Institute report examined many of these issues in relation to displacement and return in the post-CPA period.⁴⁹ An evaluation of multi-donor support to conflict prevention and peace building activities in Southern Sudan concluded that a more holistic approach with flexible localised responses was needed.⁵⁰ What continues to be a challenge is how to put these findings into practice. In considering how assistance might best be provided in South Sudan in the coming years, the following conclusions emerge from this study:

Security

- Insecurity is the main reason people stay in situations of displacement, particularly in POC sites: people do not enjoy living in POC sites, they are there because of the (limited) protection they offer.
- The current peace agreement does not address local drivers of insecurity, therefore these are likely to continue to result in local conflict unless other means are found to tackle them.

- The issue of dividing the country into 28 states is likely to cause further conflict, and potentially more displacement.

Mobility

- Maintaining mobility in uncertainty is the mainstream experience for many South Sudanese and the key to self-protection.⁵¹
- Although this study has looked at displacement due to violent conflict, historically population movement has also been key to coping with economic, social and environmental stress.

Social factors

- Social networks are one of the main mechanisms by which South Sudanese people survive protracted displacement. Despite the current conflict there are still examples of Dinka-Nuer support, as well as solidarity within ethnic groups. Resilience and humanitarian programmes need to recognise this, seek it out and build on it.
- Women play an inconspicuous but vital role in mobility and in keeping different societies connected.
- The shifting alliances and waves of fighting have led to some ethnically-based reorganisations of the displaced population. Memories of ethnically-targeted killings in towns may also lead to more ethnic clustering within and between towns. This will shape options for return and resettlement.

Livelihoods and the economy

- South Sudan is currently facing unprecedented and potentially long term economic problems, which will limit options for supporting the displaced or aiding return.
- People's livelihood strategies are complex and multi-faceted; they focus on spreading risk and include waged labour, agriculture, trade, livestock and accessing international assistance. Market access is a component of food security for many rural, as well as urban, poor.
- Displacement is reformulating the pastoralist lifestyle – instead of leaving families at a homestead where they can cultivate, families now live off food rations in a place of displacement and their presence acts as surety for pastoralists grazing cattle in another group's territory.
- Despite being a vital part of social and economic life for many South Sudanese, the cattle economy – both its market aspects and how cattle are amassed for political leverage or used for bridewealth – is poorly understood and more research is needed.
- Overall, the latest episodes of displacement have seen more and quicker moves to towns, yet the economic crisis is making urban life increasingly difficult.

Strengths to build upon

- There are areas of relative stability in South Sudan and these can be key to supporting a wider community, and yet their potential is often poorly understood and largely ignored.
- Despite the incredibly difficult situation the South Sudanese face, they still display a remarkable ability to survive, to make decisions about their lives and to assist each

other – programmes should not treat them as passive victims but as actors with agency.

- Even in areas badly affected by conflict there are usually local organisations – such as church networks and local village or town committees – that are seen as legitimate by the population. Donors and NGOs need to acknowledge, and better understand, the roles these actors play and work together with them to more effectively support displaced people.
- Some communities are willing to address issues of reconciliation and peace-building, although previous experience suggests that achievements will be limited if the national level agreement breaks down.
- There was little sign of people becoming dependent on relief aid, partly because it was not enough to meet their needs but also because they displayed a great desire to resume normal lives.

7. Recommendations

7.1 ***Communities should be supported to build up their resilience so they can not only cope with current stresses but also be in a better position to withstand future shocks. This means:***

- Understanding and analysing the links between people's livelihood and protection strategies, and incorporating this analysis into programme design.⁵²
- Developing flexible programmes that can shift between humanitarian/recovery/development modalities as the context demands, or can draw on elements of all three where appropriate.
- Developing programmes that enable people to have more choice over their livelihood strategies.
- Designing programmes that help people maintain their social networks, which are key to building resilience.

The research shows the diverse livelihoods strategies people adopt, and also the risks they face in pursuing them. Programmes should make it safer for people to undertake livelihood activities (for example, through the presence of UNMISS, UNPOL support to local security teams, firewood patrols, and regular monitoring by the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism). They should also endeavour to widen livelihoods options through better support to agriculture and small-livestock keeping (ranging from the provision of seeds and tools to infrastructure work and agricultural extension activities) and support to market development (communications, transport, rebuilding destroyed market areas). Support to pastoralism will be important but more research is needed before effective programme strategies can be developed. Developing re-forestation programmes to replenish timber cut for reconstruction and charcoal production, or promoting fuel efficient or solar stoves, would allow for more sustainable livelihoods and cut down on the risks people (mainly women) face. Increasing use of unconditional cash transfer programmes would give people more choice over how they use assets, including maintaining the social networks that will enable them to withstand future shocks.⁵³ Allowing IDPs to receive cash transfers at regular intervals regardless of their location would avoid creating a 'pull' factor and enable IDPs to

make the decisions they believe best, as research demonstrates that mobility is often key to people's survival. Where communities are hosting IDPs, programming on the basis of need rather than differentiating between IDPs and hosts would reduce tensions between hosts and IDPs and strengthen the ability to sustain support. All of these programmes will need to be developed with an understanding of how the economic situation is affecting people's livelihood choices.

7.2 Programmes need to be appropriate to the local context – one size cannot fit all. This means:

- Recognising that different parts of the country have experienced this conflict differently, and having a planning process that takes this into account.
- Investing time in understanding the history and the political economy of an area.
- Building on areas of relative stability to increase their ability to support displacement and, if necessary, act as a safe haven in future.

Taking an area-based planning approach, and investing resources in understanding the social and political economy and history of the area and how people live within it, would help develop appropriate programming. For example, one could look at southern Unity (Panyijar, Leer, Mayendit and Koch) and work with an anthropologist to understand the decisions Nuer groups make as they move across these counties and consider their options for return. This would include the complex issues of how they restock their cattle and how they make peace (or not) with their neighbours. Given the deep uncertainties around South Sudan's future this would best be done not as a one-off but as a continuing process of learning that feeds into programme design and implementation as suggested by other studies.⁵⁴ Similar approaches could be developed to support Duk county as a place of trade and social relations between Nuer and Dinka, or Akobo as a safe haven if further conflict enveloped Jonglei. An area-based approach to the Upper Nile region would bring a different set of problems but also different opportunities, such as the potential support to trade and extended remittance networks offered by Shilluk money transfer services. While recognising what is possible will vary from area to area, wherever possible programmes should aim to work with local support mechanisms (local government, local committees, churches etc.) rather than building parallel systems. This does not necessarily mean putting funding through these bodies but rather seeing them as part of the means by which people are reached and decisions made.

7.3 Invest in the future. This means:

- Ensuring links are made between work on peace, reconciliation and justice.
- Recognising that many people are severely traumatised and developing programmes to begin to deal with this.
- Using whatever opportunities there are to give IDPs access to education and training.
- Offering alternatives to youth, though recognising that without a political solution to the conflict this will not prevent all youth from being mobilized.

The South Sudanese were clear that what they most needed was peace. While it is not the job of humanitarians to deliver this, programmes should make sure they connect into local peace-building efforts. At a national level, the UK and other countries need to ensure their humanitarian work is also supported by a political strategy that works on the implementation

of the peace agreement and tries to solve the many problems around this, including issues of justice, accountability and the ending of impunity. Early efforts to develop trauma-healing programmes that are appropriate at all levels of South Sudanese society need to be built upon. And, recognising that displacement is likely to be protracted, wherever possible educational facilities need to be opened, or re-opened, even if only on a temporary basis. This is particularly true for the POC sites. It is acknowledged that the research team spent only a limited time in the POC sites, and that UNMISS is undertaking a review of these, nevertheless the lack of education and training opportunities was startling.⁵⁵ The research shows that lack of outside security drives people to these sites, providing education and training is unlikely to create much of an additional ‘pull’ factor and offers great opportunities to invest in a better future. This could include small-scale income generating opportunities for women, which, at the same time, can provide psycho-social support; opportunities for youth that will help develop positive relationships with other groups, such as sports, drama and music; training that will help youth gain a livelihood, such as computer skills, English language and vocational training; and basic secondary education (which currently seems only available in the Juba POC sites).

7.5 *Support access for IDPs to the information they need to make informed decisions regarding return and resettlement. This means:*

- Improve information flows and information-sharing so that IDPs can make more informed choices about their futures. It could include programming to strengthen radio networks and their range, as well as dedicated radio programming on the security situation in specific areas to inform decisions around returns. It might also be necessary to distribute more short wave solar/crank radios. Another option might be to set up an SMS-based information network to enable people to access information about a specific area. But people also need to be able to make their choices with an understanding of the broader context and the likely implications for their safety and wellbeing. Visits by the JMEC to explain the process for the implementation of the peace agreement and giving IDP communities an opportunity to discuss this would help.

7.6 *Develop more sustainable and effective humanitarian operations. This means:*

- Prepare for a protracted situation in which humanitarian assistance, for all its limitations, will remain a vital part of people’s survival strategy of for many years to come. Maintaining adequate funding and the quality of programming in the longer term will be a challenge. Donors should develop flexible and iterative strategies with multi-year funding which allow agencies to adapt their programming to changes in context and to take advantage of opportunities to support peace building, recovery and development initiatives when these arise. Humanitarian operations should also develop more sustainable and cost-effective ways of operating. The sole reliance on diesel for electricity generation is expensive and dirty, it faces significant supply chain challenges – particularly in times of crisis – and it will leave nothing behind when operations wind down. The deployment of solar energy systems to support humanitarian operations can provide reliable and cost-effective energy, cut reliance on diesel, and create clean energy infrastructure which will outlive the humanitarian footprint, and can transition to South Sudanese ownership and assist with recovery/rebuilding efforts.

Endnotes

- 1 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), *Humanitarian Snapshot*, 31 August 2015.
- 2 For example, see Nicholas Crawford, John Cosgrave, Simone Haysom and Nadine Walicki, *Protracted displacement: uncertain paths to self-reliance in exile*, (London: ODI, 2015).
- 3 This is not simply a matter of ethnicity. Nuer sections are also divided, with some Bul Nuer fighting on the Government of the Republic of South Sudan (GRSS) side.
- 4 For a more detailed discussion of these issues see: J. Bennet, S. Pantuliano, W. Fenton, A. Vaux, C. Barnett and E. Brusset, *Aiding the Peace: a Multi Donor Evaluation of Support to Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities in Southern Sudan 2005-2010*, (United Kingdom: ITAD Ltd, 2010).
- 5 Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Juba, South Sudan, *South Sudan: Crisis response plan*. (OCHA, 2014) accessed at https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/CAP/Revision_2014_South_Sudan_CRP_June_2014.pdf
- 6 African Union Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan, *Final Report*, (Addis Ababa: African Union, 15 October 2014) p.21.
- 7 See *South Sudan: a Civil War by Any Other Name*, (Nairobi, ICG, April 2014), for a more detailed discussion.
- 8 African Union Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan, *Final Report*, (Addis Ababa: African Union, 15 October 2014) p.27.
- 9 See, among others, UNMISS, *Conflict in South Sudan: A Human Rights Report*, (Juba: UNMISS, 2014).
- 10 Communique of the 55th extra-ordinary session of the IGAD Council of Ministers, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, January 30-31, 2016.
- 11 "South Sudan government accuses SPLM-IO of besieging Bentiu", *Sudan Tribune*, Wednesday 3 February 2016.
- 12 IPC Technical Working Group in South Sudan, *Integrated Food Security Phase Classification: The Republic of South Sudan* (September 2015), http://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/1_IPC%20South%20Sudan%20-%20September%202015%20-FINAL.pdf
- 13 World Food Programme, *Special Working Paper on Devaluation of South Sudan Pound: Short-term Food Security Implications* (2016). The food security and nutrition monitoring system reported in December 2015 that 43 percent of the population is market dependent.
- 14 IPC Technical Working Group in South Sudan, *Integrated Food Security Phase Classification: The Republic of South Sudan* (September 2015), http://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/1_IPC%20South%20Sudan%20-%20September%202015%20-FINAL.pdf
- 15 World Food Programme, (2016) p.6.
- 16 IGAD Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 17 August 2015.
- 17 OCHA provides a definition of displacement: "internally displaced persons are persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border." OCHA, *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*, Second edition, (New York: United Nations, 2004).
- 18 Edward Thomas, *The Kafia Kingi Enclave*, (London: Rift Valley Institute, 2010) pp.85ff.
- 19 The *toic* are the low lying areas that are swamp in rains but provide rich – and vitally important – pastures in the dry season.
- 20 Douglas Johnson, 'Political Ecology in the Upper Nile: The Twentieth Century Expansion of the Pastoral 'Common Economy'', *Journal of African History*, (Cambridge, 1989) p.483.
- 21 Scopas S. Poggo, *The First Sudanese Civil War: Africans, Arabs and Israelis in the Southern Sudan, 1955-1972*, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009) pp.87-88.
- 22 Interview with a payam official, January 2016.
- 23 Interview with a payam official, February 2016.
- 24 Interview with an NGO worker, January 2016.
- 25 National Bureau of Statistics, *National Baseline Household Survey 2009. Report for South Sudan*, (Juba: National Bureau of Statistics, 2012) p.64.
- 26 Edward Thomas, *South Sudan, a slow liberation*, (London: Zed, 2015) p.247.
- 27 Edward Thomas, (2015) p.146.
- 28 Average Annual Rate of Change of the Urban Population, (per cent), *World Urbanization Prospects*, 2014.

- 29 Interview with a humanitarian worker, Malakal, 2 February 2016.
- 30 Office of the Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator for South Sudan, *Crisis impacts on households in Unity state, South Sudan*, 2014-2015, (Office of the Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator for South Sudan, January 2016).
- 31 Mayom county is Bul Nuer territory and as Bul Nuer militia were aligned with the SPLA forces, people from that area are likely to feel less insecure in Bentiu town.
- 32 See, for example, REACH, *South Sudan displacement trends analysis*, April 2015.
- 33 REACH, *Situation Overview: Greater Nyal East, South Sudan*, December 2015.
- 34 Interviews, February 2016. The REACH assessment above tells a similar story.
- 35 The REACH assessment also indicates that most IDPs did not have relatives in Nyal, although some people spoke of a migration out of Leer to Nyal some 40 years ago.
- 36 South Sudan Law Society, *Search for a New Beginning: Perceptions of Truth, Justice, Reconciliation and Healing in South Sudan*, (Juba: South Sudan Law Society, 2015) p.24.
- 37 Human Rights Watch *"They Burned It All": Destruction of Villages, Killings and Sexual Violence in Unity State, South Sudan*, (New York; 2015) p.24.
- 38 IPC Technical Working Group in South Sudan, *Call for Immediate Humanitarian Action to Prevent Famine in South Sudan*, IPC Alert, Issue 3 (October 2015), http://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Alert_3_SouthSudan_Crisis_Oct2015.pdf
- 39 Radio Tamazuj, "SPLA shut down supply route to Malakal protection site", 15 February 2016, available at <https://radiotamazuj.org/en/article/spla-shut-down-supply-route-malakal-protection-site>
- 40 Interview with a representative of Nonviolent Peaceforce, an international non-governmental organisation, February 2016.
- 41 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *South Sudan 2016 Humanitarian Response Plan* (January - December 2016), accessed at <http://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/south-sudan-2016-humanitarian-response-plan-january-december-2016>
- 42 Sarah Bailey and Simon Harragin, *Food assistance, reintegration and dependency in Southern Sudan: A report commissioned by the World Food Programme*. Humanitarian Policy Group. (London: ODI, 2009) pp.29ff.
- 43 For more detail, see International Organization for migration (IOM) *Malakal Response Update* 28/02/2016.
- 44 For details, see The International Centre for Not-for-Profit-Law, *NGO Law Monitor: South Sudan* (February 2016), accessible at <http://www.icnl.org/research/monitor/southsudan.html>
- 45 The same point was made to interviewers for another recent study, see Center for Civilians in Conflict, *"Those Who Could Not Run, Died" Civilian Perspectives on the Conflict in South Sudan*, (Centre for Civilians in Conflict, 2016).
- 46 *South Sudan Resettlement Strategy: Supporting the displaced people in South Sudan to rebuild their lives back in their communities with safety and dignity*, SPLM/A-IO, ROSS, Pagak, South Sudan.
- 47 Nicholas Crawford, John Cosgrave, Simone Haysom and Nadine Walicki, *Protracted displacement: uncertain paths to self-reliance in exile*, (London: ODI, 2015) p.1 & p.3.
- 48 R. Barber, Joint Briefing Paper, *Getting it Right from the Start: Priorities for Action in the New Republic of South Sudan*, (Oxford: Oxfam, 2011) p.3.
- 49 S. Pantuliano, M. Buchanan-Smith, P. Murphy and I. Mosel, *The long road home: opportunities and obstacles to the reintegration of IDPs and refugees returning to Southern Sudan and the Three Areas*, (London: ODI, 2008).
- 50 J. Bennet et al, (2010) p.xv and xvi.
- 51 See also, Mark Duffield, Khassim Diagne, Vicky Tennant, *Evaluation of UNHCR's returnee reintegration programme in Southern Sudan*, (Geneva: UNHCR, 2008), p.3 & p.4.
- 52 For further discussion on this concept, see Susanne Jaspars and Sorcha O'Callaghan, *Challenging choices: protection and livelihoods in conflict*, (London: ODI, 2010).
- 53 For further discussion of cash-based programmes, see: Paul Harvey, *Cash-based responses in emergencies*, (London: ODI, 2007); and Report of the High Level Panel on Humanitarian Aid, *Doing Cash Differently: how cash transfers can transform humanitarian aid*, (London: ODI, 2010).
- 54 J. Bennet et al, (2010) p.xviii.
- 55 The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs *2016 South Sudan Humanitarian Needs Overview* notes that "Nearly one in every three schools in South Sudan has been destroyed, damaged, occupied or closed, impacting on the education of more than 900,000 children."

Report of visit to Upper Nile

1. *Areas visited*

Three areas in Upper Nile were visited during the field research: Malakal; Melut, including Melut POC site and the neighbouring IDP camps (Dethoma 1+2, Khor Adar, Malek, and New Paloich), and Paloich town; and Wau Shilluk and Kodok. Only a few days were spent in each location and what follows is not representative of all of Upper Nile state. In each location we were able to meet members of IDP populations, host communities, relevant local authorities, and NGO service providers. In Malakal POC site, meetings were held with a range of Dinka, Nuer, and Shilluk IDPs from Sectors 1 and 2 of the POC site. In Melut, meetings were held with Nuer and Dinka men and women in Melut POC site; Dinka IDPs in Dethoma 1+2, Khor Adar and Malek camps; and the small Nuer IDP community in New Paloich. In Wau Shilluk and Kodok, we met Shilluk IDPs and members of the host communities. The conflict dynamics and humanitarian situation we observed in Malakal and Wau Shilluk were strongly interrelated and very fragile due to uncertainty around the President's decision to move from 10 to 28 States, and this is likely to remain the case until, and unless, the issue of the new state borders is resolved. By contrast, the situation in Melut was more stable and further removed from the immediate uncertainty and conflict risks. The security situation was calm in all three locations during our visits.

2. *Perceptions of the current conflict*

The conflict in Upper Nile has played out in waves, with new developments leading to shifting allegiances, multiple displacements, and a humanitarian response that has struggled to keep pace. Malakal town has been attacked at least 12 separate times, and switched hands 9 times. Each round of fighting has led to different inflows/outflows of civilians to the Malakal POC site, depending on the ethnicity and alliances of the invading or occupying force. One veteran humanitarian worker described Malakal as the most difficult context he'd seen in 25 years of humanitarian work, due to the constantly shifting context and the wild swings this created for the safety and security of different groups of civilians.¹ While there has been a period of relative calm – the last major fighting in Malakal town was in July 2015 – the situation remains extremely volatile, due most directly to deep Shilluk anger at the proposed borders of the 28 states. These are viewed as an attempt by “the Dinka” to steal Malakal and lands south of the Sobat and east of the Nile from the Shilluk. The latest outbreak of fighting between Shilluk and Dinka (including SPLA soldiers) inside Malakal POC site on the 17th/18th February, which killed at least 18 and re-displaced as many as 24,000, highlights the divisions.

The Shilluk involvement in the civil war is overshadowed by the larger Dinka-Nuer narrative, but is a major factor in the conflict dynamics in Upper Nile. The conflict has led to greater organisation and cohesion among the Shilluk, who are fighting more for a local agenda – the ownership and control of perceived traditional Shilluk land, including Malakal town – rather than a national political agenda. There were pre-existing tensions in and around Malakal prior to December 2013, including land and border disputes between Shilluk and Dinka, and disagreements around the 2010 elections, which led to sporadic fighting between 2008 and 2012. There is at least a 35-year history of boundary disputes between Shilluk and Dinka over the traditional ownership of land, particularly south of the Sobat and east of the Nile. Disputes began in 1980, and led to violence in 1982, around Dinka attempts to claim land in Khorfulus (in Jonglei) that Shilluk claim as their own. Actions by the Juba government at the time seemingly re-affirmed the Shilluk traditional claims to land (based on colonial maps and boundaries), but the issue continued throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, with local Dinka land claims extending to Malakal town and other Shilluk land on the east bank of the Nile. Fighting erupted between Dinka and Shilluk on 9 January 2009, following a disagreement in Malakal stadium for the commemoration of the CPA anniversary over who should lead the procession. Later in 2009, during a visit to help reconcile Dinka from Atar and Khorfulus, President Salva Kiir announced the creation of Pigi county in northeast Jonglei, incorporating Shilluk land south of the Sobat into the new Dinka-majority county. Local violence against Shilluk villages in the areas of the newly-formed Pigi county created new resentment, and a new Shilluk armed group emerged under the leadership of Robert Gwang. The 2010 elections further strained relations, with leading Shilluk politician Dr. Lam Akol leading the main opposition party (the SPLM-DC) against the ruling SPLM. The SPLM-DC picked up four seats in Shilluk areas, but faced arrest and harassment from the authorities. This was eventually resolved, and a peace conference in Fashoda led to an agreement with Robert Gwang in August 2010.²

While there have been several different Shilluk militias over the last decade, Shilluk forces today have largely merged into a single “Agwelek” army, under the leadership of Johnson Olony. Olony has fought on and off with the Juba government since 2009. He was a recipient of Sudanese military support and was allied to other anti-Juba southern militias under the South Sudan Democratic Movement/Army (SSDM/A) before, and immediately after, independence. While the view from Juba sees this pattern as evidence of an unreliable militia leader who regularly shifts allegiances, the view among the Shilluk is that Olony has stayed true to the mission of protecting Shilluk land – and that he will pursue tactical alliances as needed in order to best support this mission. While the Agwelek are the main Shilluk army, there is another Shilluk armed group present north of Kaka towards Renk – the Tiger Faction New Forces – led by Gen. Yoanes Okej. Olony had formally accepted a government amnesty earlier in 2013 and was in the process of reintegrating his forces into the SPLA when the 2013 crisis erupted. The initial fighting in Malakal town was between Dinka and Nuer troops, though the violence affected Dinka, Nuer and Shilluk civilians alike.³ The Shilluk forces initially fought alongside the SPLA, as a result of SPLM/A-IO attacks on Shilluk land on the west bank of the Nile. Yet deep seated mistrust and continuing tensions eventually led to Olony defecting from the SPLA in April 2015, and ultimately joining the SPLM/A-IO in July 2015.

These shifting alliances and waves of fighting have led to a gradual separation of the displaced population by ethnic group in most of the areas visited – displaced Dinka are mostly now in Dinka lands, displaced Shilluk are mostly in Shilluk lands. A small number of Nuer in the Melut area and in Malakal are stuck without access to Nuer lands, and find themselves in much more limited circumstances as a result. Many displaced civilians have also fled greater distances; to Sudan, Juba, Uganda and Kenya. It seems that those who are left are those without means to travel. At the time of the visit, the Malakal POC site was formally divided between Dinka, Nuer, and Shilluk – a UN-initiated fix to limit the violence that was occurring within the camp in response to episodes of fighting between forces outside. The fighting in Malakal POC site on February 17th/18th further disrupted this balance, with reports that the entirety of the Dinka IDP population had fled the POC site and were now staying in SPLA-controlled Malakal town.⁴ It seems that the two-plus years of conflict have effectively led to ethnic segregation in parts of Upper Nile and a hardening of single tribal identities. Many bemoaned that this came at the expense of a broader shared South Sudanese identity.

Different views on the conflict were also evident in different communities’ perspectives on government and local authorities. Among Shilluk and Nuer IDPs, in particular, there were repeated complaints that the government had been hijacked to pursue a narrow Dinka-driven agenda, with regular criticism of both the President and the Jieng Council of Elders as those most responsible. The Shilluk remain organised under tribal structures under the Shilluk King, whose rule appears to have been solidified upon his return to Fashoda, following a brief challenge from within the royal family over the King’s alleged support of the government’s proposed 28 states.⁵ The Agwelek army under Johnson Olony effectively serves as the Shilluk defence forces.

The Nuer IDPs met in Malakal POC site were long-time Malakal residents with some access to resources and information, and they intended to return to Malakal when it was safe. By contrast, the Nuer IDPs in Melut POC site and New Paloich were largely disconnected and powerless. Most of them had previously worked for oil companies in Paloich and had brought their families with them. They had been brought to either Melut POC site or New Paloich as a precautionary measure by the SPLA or the police in late 2013, for their own protection.⁶ Everyone interviewed in these two sites wished to leave Melut to return to their home areas but did not know how they would get there, when it would be safe, or how to find out.

Among Dinka IDPs, there was regular reference to intra-southern violence in Upper Nile in the 1990s and the role that Riek Machar had played in that conflict following his split from the SPLA. Dinka IDPs in Melut area displayed trust in the government and explained that they would wait for the government to inform them that it was safe to return to their home areas. IDP leaders in Dethoma 1+2 were well informed and claimed to receive regular phone updates from “the government” on the peace process and the current situation.

3. *Complex patterns of displacement*

Several common themes emerged from displaced populations interviewed in different locations. First, the majority of people (with the exception of those in Melut POC site) had been displaced multiple times during this conflict. Second, a majority of people had experienced displacement during the last civil war. However, many people drew a distinction in the levels and types of violence between the last civil war and this conflict – highlighting that the current conflict has been more violent with a destructive targeting of civilians, including women, children and the elderly. Third, IDPs in all the locations reported having lost everything they owned, including livestock. Fourth, there was little evidence of organisation or assistance for civilian populations as they moved. Across all communities, people reported having to flee from fighting, grabbing children and what they could, with civilian populations scattering in all directions.

The ethnic dimension of the conflict has meant that fighting in and around Malakal has had a back and forth effect on civilian populations in Malakal town and POC site (i.e. Dinka civilians fled to the POC site when the SPLM/A-IO attacked Malakal; Nuer civilians fled to the POC site when the SPLA counter-attacked), though it seems civilians have been targeted consistently, by all forces during this war. The fact that the Shilluk forces under Johnson Olony began the war on the side of the SPLA, before switching to SPLM/A-IO, has meant that Shilluk civilians have been targeted by both sides at different times in the conflict. The alternating control of Malakal town has also created temporary corridors for Dinka and Nuer IDPs to leave the POC site, under the protection of either SPLM/A-IO or SPLA forces. It was said repeatedly that those with resources or connections had left – to Sudan, Juba, Yei, Uganda or Kenya – and the impression was that many of those who remain in Malakal POC site do so because they intend to return to Malakal town.

The majority of those met in Malakal POC site were residents of Malakal town prior to the fighting. The remaining Dinka IDPs in Malakal POC site had fled from Atar (in Jonglei) or from Baliet county. They had arrived in December 2013 or early January 2014 and remained in the POC site throughout. The Shilluk and Nuer IDPs interviewed in Malakal POC site had all been residents of Malakal town prior to the conflict and intended to return to Malakal town when peace returned. There were also divisions within Malakal POC site between Shilluk communities from Malakal town and those from Wau Shilluk.

The displaced populations in Melut tended to be more settled, with fewer security concerns. There was little fighting in Melut at the start of the conflict, so those in the POC site – primarily Shilluk and Nuer – had moved mostly from within Melut town (in addition some Nuer were brought from the oil areas further to the north). Dethoma 1 (19,353 IDPs) and 2 (8,637 IDPs) are the two largest IDP camps, with Dinka populations from Baliet county and Pigi county (Jonglei), respectively. These camps were set up in January 2014 with the agreement of the Commissioners of Baliet, Pigi and Melut counties.⁷ Khor Adar and Malek are newer IDP camps, which emerged after Johnson Olony's/the Agwelek attack on Melut and surrounding areas in May 2015. These populations are all from Baliet county but had previously been displaced from their home villages to Rom and Akoka (within Baliet county). They fled again further north during the May 2015 attacks, stopping eventually in Khor Adar and Malek, where they made contact with the host community – who welcomed them “because we spoke the same language [Dinka]”⁸. These four Dinka populated IDP camps have smooth relations with local Dinka host communities, who were also able to benefit from water and health services that NGOs had provided for the IDP communities.

In Wau Shilluk, there is a large Shilluk IDP population of close to 20,000 people (the original host community was estimated to be between 3,000-5,000). The IDPs are primarily from Malakal town but also include those displaced from various rounds of fighting on the west bank with SPLM/A-IO (in 2014) and the SPLA in April 2015.⁹ There are two important dynamics to note about displacement patterns in Wau Shilluk: First, the Shilluk populations in Wau Shilluk and Malakal are closely connected, with waves of movement across the river depending on the security and food security situation in each location. Many people in Wau Shilluk had spent time in Malakal POC site and still had family living there. River transport opened up again by October 2015 and this has made for easier movement of people and trade between Wau Shilluk and Malakal – though civilians and traders still face at least four taxation points and multiple security risks in their route to and from Malakal POC site.

Displacement to Sudan

The second important dynamic is access to Sudan from the west bank. The local authorities in Wau Shilluk estimated that there are at least 100,000 Shilluk who have fled to Sudan during this conflict, with the majority in White Nile state.¹⁰ One IDP interviewed in Kodok had just returned from Sudan – having left his family behind in Rideys 2 camp in Jebelein, White Nile, in order to try to earn some money in Kodok to send back to his family. He and his family originally fled the fighting in Malakal town in December 2013, first to a village (Ogot East) south of the city, then eventually crossing the river in February 2014 to escape both SPLA and SPLM/A-IO forces. They stayed briefly in Wau Shilluk before fleeing north to Kodok to escape attacks from SPLM/A-IO forces. They then returned to Wau Shilluk, where they stayed for several months. In May 2014, local fighting between Dinka and Shilluk convinced the family to flee to the relative safety of Sudan. They walked from Wau Shilluk to Fashoda, travelled by lorry to Kalagan, then to Greid in South Kordofan, where they took another lorry to Rideys camp in Jebelein. The trip from Wau Shilluk to Greid cost 350 SSP per person, and from Greid to Rideys 150 Sudanese pounds per person. The entire trip took five days. They have received services and some support in Sudan but he listed a very long list of challenges they are facing, mostly stemming from systematic discrimination from Sudanese authorities and local merchants. There is very little employment and the weakening South Sudanese Pound undercuts the assistance that comes via money transfers from family in South Sudan (see below). His return trip to Kodok in late January 2016 took four days. It cost a total of 60 Sudanese pounds (20 from Khartoum to Kosti, 40 to Maginnes); and 300 SSP from Maginnes to Kodok. There were repeated reports in Wau Shilluk/Kodok that the South Sudanese population in Sudan was struggling and was anxious to return home, they were only waiting for peace to arrive.

There was no mention of movement to Sudan among the Dinka IDPs in Melut area, and some Dinka IDPs who were in Sudan during the last war explained that the option of fleeing to Sudan had been considered and explicitly rejected: “We don’t want to go back to Sudan, because we’re no longer a part of Sudan. And there are no services or UN assistance there, the way we’re receiving here, or for those who have gone to Uganda, Kenya or Ethiopia”.¹¹

4. *Livelihoods, food insecurity, economic issues and trade*

The livelihoods of the displaced populations were severely stressed across all locations visited. All IDP communities reported having lost everything when they fled, including livestock. Though there were sizeable herds of cattle and goats in both Melut and Wau Shilluk, these reportedly belonged to the host communities. One IDP community encountered in Melut had received goats from World Vision and several communities were looking after the cattle of host communities in exchange for milk. There were very limited opportunities for employment or income generation in all the locations visited and repeated requests, particularly in Melut and Wau Shilluk, for NGOs to provide non-food items that can enable food collection and income generation: seeds and tools for cultivation, and/or nets and canoes for fishing.

Trade was an important factor in the local economies of all three areas visited, though the impact of the weakened SSP was very evident and poses a major challenge as it has significantly undercut the purchasing power of South Sudanese people. In Melut, and particularly Paloich, there were well-stocked markets, and traders and goods from both Sudan and Ethiopia. Despite this, there were reports from IDPs and NGOs in the area that IDPs were facing food shortages due to long delays in food distributions and small ration sizes when food was available. In Dethoma 1+2, Khor Adar and Malek IDP camps, IDPs had freedom of movement and access to the river, and there was evidence of some small-scale cultivation. There was also movement between camps and access to markets in Melut (particularly from Dethoma 1+2, which are located close to town).

Malakal POC site and Wau Shilluk offered a very different picture to Melut. Official river access between the two was re-opened by the SPLA in October 2015, which has facilitated trade and the movement of people (though this was reportedly shut down again by the SPLA in mid-February).¹² That said, populations were still able to move back and forth across the river even when river access was closed. For example, approximately 18,000 moved from Wau Shilluk to Malakal POC site in July-August 2015, primarily as a result of food insecurity on the west bank (due, in part, to an expanding IDP population that had grown to 39,000 people; the lack of humanitarian NGO presence and services at the time in Wau Shilluk; and the lack of trade access with Sudan due to the rainy season, and with Malakal POC site due to SPLA security blockages along the river).

With the re-opening of river access, the end of the rainy season and the expansion of NGO service provision in Wau Shilluk, trade was booming and the markets were full in both Malakal and Wau Shilluk. The flow of goods and money moved in both directions, though trends were noticeable. Locally grown fruits and vegetables and some livestock moved from Wau Shilluk into Malakal POC site; housing material (iron sheeting, wiring, wooden beams – presumably looted or recovered from Malakal town) moved to Wau Shilluk. There is an organised “port” in Wau Shilluk, and all boats and canoes are registered under the local administration. Passengers leaving Wau Shilluk must buy a ticket for 25 SSP, plus cargo charges. On the Malakal side, tickets reportedly cost 30-40 SSP. There are up to four SPLA and SPLM/A-IO “tax points” along the river between Wau Shilluk and Malakal. At Wau Shilluk “port”, we heard that some SPLA soldiers in Malakal use Shilluk traders to sell their goods (looted material from Malakal town) in Wau Shilluk market.¹³ There was also construction ongoing within Malakal POC site, presumably with materials coming from Malakal town.

Wau Shilluk and the west bank benefit greatly from easy road access to Sudan. This is evident both in the flow of Shilluk IDPs to Sudan, and in the scale of trade from Sudan. Five lorries stocked with goods from Sudan arrived on the first day the team was in Wau Shilluk, brought by Sudanese traders, and market stalls were full. There was effectively a barter system in place. Sudanese traders accepted SSP within Wau Shilluk in exchange for their goods, but then used these to buy cattle, livestock or household equipment (like refrigerators) locally, which they brought back to Sudan. A Shilluk trader in Wau Shilluk explained that the Sudanese enjoyed a significant trade advantage and received very advantageous terms: in Wau Shilluk, a cow sells for 2,300 SSP (approximately \$100 USD at the time of the interview); in Jedaïd, a market area north of Wau Shilluk and Kodok on the border with South Kordofan, a cow sells for 2,500 Sudanese pounds (approximately \$400 USD at the time of the interview).¹⁴ The trader explained that he and his colleagues would sometimes travel to Jedaïd to buy and sell goods directly at the border, moving by foot, boat or lorry.

Prior to the outbreak of conflict, people in Wau Shilluk and Kodok traded with Juba, Malakal and Renk (by river) and with Nuer from Jonglei and Unity state, in addition to Sudan. Trade from Juba and Renk has stopped during the current conflict, leaving Sudan as the main trade route. Small-scale trade is continuing with Nuer from Fangak.

Money transfer services among the Shilluk

One notable development in Malakal POC site and Wau Shilluk is the emergence of money transfer companies, which have been formed since the start of the conflict and cater primarily to the Shilluk community. Interviews were conducted with officials at three of the five companies in Wau Shilluk, which are Shilluk-owned.¹⁵ Though there is some difference in geographic coverage between the companies, they tend to all have branches in Wau Shilluk, Malakal POC site, Khartoum, Kosti (and some in camps for South Sudanese in Jebelein, such as Rideys 1+2, and Kashafa), and in Juba. Some also have branches in Uganda and the Kakuma refugee camp (Kenya). The companies charge a commission of between 3-5% per transfer (it tended to be 3% within South Sudan, and 5% to Sudan) and the exchange rates between SSP, Sudanese Pounds, US dollars, as well as Ugandan and Kenyan shillings were set daily. From Wau Shilluk, the primary inflow of money came from Malakal POC site, while the primary outflow went to Sudan, where many people were supporting relatives or families. It was noted that the collapsing SSP has been very damaging for these efforts. It was impossible to estimate the size of these money flows, but one company estimated that they handled between 30-80 customers on a slow day in Wau Shilluk, noting that the “transfers have gone down since salaries stopped.”¹⁶

These money transfer companies offer an extremely valuable service for IDP communities, who are spread out across South Sudan and between countries, as it provides a secure system for transferring resources to family, relatives and friends. No parallel services or companies seem to exist for other displaced communities, money transfers either happen physically (e.g. someone carries money to/from Bentiu to Juba), or they are made via phone credit. The companies face considerable challenges, including difficulties with the physical transfer of money between branches. They have come under pressure in Sudan from national security agents and fear that they may also come under pressure in Juba as their service is assisting populations seen to be in opposition to the Juba government.

5. *Humanitarian and community responses and protection issues*

The humanitarian response, and the opening of the POC sites in Malakal, Melut and elsewhere, has undoubtedly saved tens of thousands of lives since December 2013. However, there is widespread recognition among both South Sudanese and international actors that these responses are temporary fixes and that a return to peace would be the only lasting solution. The situation for IDPs in the Malakal POC site was by far the most difficult of any location visited. Despite overcrowding, fire hazards and internal tensions, the POC site does offer some protection and access to some services and education as well as to food aid. However, the 17th/18th February fighting in Malakal POC site demonstrates both the current limitations of the POC site, and the real threat facing Nuer and Shilluk IDPs from SPLA soldiers outside. This is reinforced by regular reports of arrests, harassment, kidnappings or killings in Malakal town, or en route between Malakal POC site and the port. The youth faced challenges in all the locations visited but this was most acute in Malakal POC site. There was little programming for teenagers, nor schooling beyond primary level. This contributed to a range of problems (crime, fighting, drinking, the breakdown of authority) that were fuelled, in part, by the large number of idle, angry youth in the camps. Greater support for sports programmes, and youth-appropriate training and activities, are desperately needed.

Women face great challenges when leaving the camps to collect firewood, particularly as the distances required are growing longer as firewood supplies are being depleted closer to camps. The stories were most harrowing in Malakal POC site but similar difficulties face women in the Melut area (particularly for Nuer and Shilluk women in Melut POC site, but also for Dinka women) and, to a much lesser degree, in Wau Shilluk. UNMISS-led firewood patrols have begun in Malakal but these are not yet well organised or particularly effective. There is a need for better protection strategies for women collecting firewood in insecure areas. One possible mitigation strategy could be the introduction of fuel-efficient solar cookstoves, which can reduce and minimize the amount of firewood required for cooking. Also observed was the growing impact of deforestation for charcoal, most notably on the west bank, which is one of the few income-generating activities available to IDPs. The large expansion of charcoal production has negative environmental impacts and reduces options for gathering firewood.

There were some worrying divisions within the humanitarian community, which several NGO workers ascribed to a difficult funding environment in which NGOs were competing for the same funding from a small set of donors, who themselves have had shifting priorities in this difficult context. Splits were also observed on the administration of the POC sites and the level and type of threats being faced by different IDP communities. There was an impression that UNMISS and some UN agencies were actively working to close the POC sites, and that donor funding was increasingly lining up behind this goal. Continuing funding for a programme in Malakal POC site is being shifted and made available only for areas outside the POC site (such as Wau Shilluk or Malakal town), in order to serve as a 'pull factor' to get IDPs out of the camps.

6. *Returns*

Across all locations, people had very limited access to information about the peace process or broader situation. Women interviewed routinely had less access to information than men. People's primary source of information was radio (Radio Tamazuj and Radio Miraya were mentioned consistently as the stations of choice). In the Melut area, where there seemed to be fewer radios and they were out of the Malakal FM range, people relied on phone calls for their news.

In contemplating returns, the point was made repeatedly that IDPs had little-to-no information about the actual security situation in their home areas, be that Malakal town or villages in Baliet county or Jonglei. People appreciated some of the security updates they heard by radio but requested more regular information about specific places (such as Malakal town) to be integrated into radio programming in order to inform their decision-making. People also had differing levels of trust of different sources of information. As noted above, Dinka IDPs in the Melut area expressed trust in the government and assumed that they would return to their home areas when the government informed them it was safe. For Nuer and Shilluk in Malakal and the west bank, their primary condition for contemplating returns was the withdrawal of SPLA troops from Malakal town, followed by the formation of the transitional government and deployment of SPLM/A-IO forces into the town. However Malakal town has experienced massive destruction and there was a widespread view among IDPs and international humanitarian workers in Malakal that returns to Malakal town, particularly for those leaving the direct protection of the POC site, will be a multi-year process even if the peace agreement holds.

Annex B:

Report of visit to Unity

1. *Areas visited*

Two areas were visited in Unity: Bentiu, mainly but not only the POC site; and Nyal in Panyijar, the southernmost county of Unity. It had been intended to go to Leer but the security situation meant this was not possible in the end, however the analysis draws on interviews with some of those displaced from Leer as well as detailed discussion with Nonviolent Peaceforce, which undertook an assessment in Leer in February 2016. While in Nyal, it was also possible to interview some of those displaced from Koch, Leer and Mayendit counties. It is important, however, to recognise that what follows is not representative of the dynamics of the whole of Unity state. Southern Unity, and particularly Panyijar, has always had a different dynamic than the north of the state, not least because it had a very different experience of the second civil war. The Sudan Armed Forces and its allied militia never really penetrated the far south and, to some extent, it has always been something of a safe haven for the Nuer. Likewise, while the current conflict saw an attack on Nyal, it was relatively quickly repulsed and although there was burning and looting there were not the atrocities seen in some other parts of Unity.

At the time of the research, the state was relatively calm – although none of the underlying tensions had been addressed and thus any sense of stability was very tenuous. The appointment of Stephen Buay as the new commander of the SPLA 4th Division in Bentiu had made a big improvement to the security situation there, but uncertainty as to whether he would stay in post meant there was not yet confidence that this change would last.

In both locations, efforts were made to speak with a wide range of people – male and female, young and old. These included community leaders and elders; recipients of assistance in the host community as well as IDPs; people with differing occupations and education levels prior to displacement; traders; South Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Association officials; members of the local church; as well as humanitarian workers. Unfortunately plans to speak with some of the White Army youth that were providing the security for Nyal had to be cancelled due to an unexpected visit of the County Commissioner.

2. *Perceptions of the current conflict*

All of the Nuer interviewed in Unity saw this conflict not as a war between the Nuer and Dinka peoples, nor between sub sections of the Nuer, but as a war that the government was waging against the Nuer, hoping to ensure that they could never again challenge its political power. It was striking that the only time the word Dinka was used was in relation to a “Dinka-dominated government”, the Jieng Council of Elders, or the President being “a president for the Dinka not for the whole nation”. As one interviewee said: “This is a conflict between people at the top not people at the bottom”. There was anger that what was essentially a political conflict had been “tribalised”. As noted in numerous reports, levels of violence have been exceedingly high and this is seen by local communities as a direct consequence of the government targeting a large number of the Nuer people. People believed they were being deliberately driven off their lands so they could not support the SPLM/A-IO. Even where these actions were carried out by militia, it was said that they were supported by government tanks. Interviewees spoke of their fear of further rounds of violence unless those who had ordered the killings were brought to justice. One explained: “To build trust is to bring people to justice, without this we cannot have peace; if there is no justice there will be no harmony, even if there is a transitional government.” Another spoke of how “This crisis has its roots in the past crisis, the crisis of 1991, if this is not addressed properly what has happened now will happen again”.

Confidence in the current peace agreement was very low and it was often noted how the President did not sign the agreement immediately but only – and reluctantly – when he got back to Juba. The announcement of the shift to 28 states has further reduced confidence that there is any real willingness to implement the agreement. Many of those interviewed said the decree would create multiple conflicts over new state boundaries and would take South Sudan in the opposite direction to that in which it should be going: towards the creation of ethnic fiefdoms rather than the development of a multi-ethnic nation. Although people welcomed the fact that there had been some improvement in security since the signing of the agreement, they felt that if the issue of 28 states was not resolved it would take South Sudan back to war: “If this peace fails about the problem of the 28 states we will leave everything and join the [SPLM/A-] IO”.¹⁷

On the positive side, if the political settlement holds, there does seem to be room to address issues of local peace-building. There remain some excellent examples of Dinka-Nuer support, both with Nuer being protected in neighbouring Jonglei state and Dinka who went to Ganyiel being sheltered by Nuer. Many people spoke of their commitment to peace, including one of the chiefs in Bentiu POC site who said the chiefs had written to Riek Machar asking him to sign the peace agreement as, “this is the will of our people”.

The prevailing view of the conflict has several implications in terms of humanitarian assistance:

- For many people, it will take a long time before they feel confident to return. They are afraid of the government and the SPLA, and the vast majority said they would not go back until the SPLA was removed from their home locations, a TGoNU was formed and Riek Machar was back in Juba.
- There is a fear of further rounds of conflict and displacement. People are reluctant to invest in anything that could again be taken from them.
- As a result of what they have seen and what they have been through many people are visibly traumatised.¹⁸ This will need addressing as part of any humanitarian response.

3. *Complex patterns of displacement*

The patterns of displacement in Unity have been, and continue to be, multidimensional. Although, on the outbreak of violence some of those living in Bentiu and Rubkona fled to the Bentiu POC site, many others fled south to Koch, Leer and Mayendit; they said they believed the conflict would not last long and they would soon be able to return home. As the conflict moved back and forth across the state over the following two years they fled multiple times, scattering in different directions as they tried to escape the bullets, and losing family members in the process. As soon as there was a little stability, some people made further journeys in an attempt to find relatives that had been lost in the flight. A number of women in Bentiu POC site spoke of going south to Koch to look for children they had lost (they had heard from someone who came up from Koch that there were many unaccompanied children there), later returning with them to the POC site. One young man spoke of how he had come to the POC site to look after his younger brothers: “to make sure they are good boys”. Similarly, some of those who left Bentiu for Juba POC site did so in order to reunite with family.

For many IDPs this was not the first time they had been displaced but it echoed journeys they had made in Sudan’s second civil war. One woman interviewed in Bentiu POC site originally came from a village in Leer County. When fighting started in 1991 she went to Rubkona County and then, in 1999, to Bentiu, where she was living at the start of the 2013 fighting. She then ran south to Koch, later moving to Mayendit and finally back to Leer. Then, in October 2014, she left Leer for the Bentiu POC site, taking six days by foot, as her two sons, aged 11 and 20 had fled north and she thought if she went to the POC site they would eventually come and find her there – which they did. Her daughter and her daughter’s children, who originally went south with her, went to Lankien (in Jonglei). Another person, a chief from Mayom payam – four hours walk away and bordering Lakes State – spoke of how the fighting started in Mayom before reaching Koch or Nyal and how people fled Mayom to Koch, Mayendit and Leer, only to be displaced a second time when fighting reached these locations. They then came back again to Mayom payam but finding that there was nothing there as everything had been looted they were surviving by living on the islands, fishing and eating wild roots.

After the initial fighting, Unity was relatively calm until April 2015 when a major offensive was launched by the SPLA and allied militias, driving south to Machar’s home area of Leer. Many of the displaced initially fled to neighbouring islands or to the forest, hiding out in the hopes of being able to go back. They spoke of not making “any choice” but simply running wherever they could to escape the shooting, which, in many cases, came after them. Some went back home briefly under cover of darkness to collect the fishing nets and other vital assets that would make their later journey south possible. The next six months saw further attacks punctuated by periods of calm, during which a few tried to go home only to flee again as the next attack came. Some came directly south to Panyijar but many more seem to have done the journey in stages, resting up on the islands for weeks at a time. The lucky few had access to canoes, many more went by foot, wading in water that was sometimes neck-high, fashioning basic boats out of branches and plastic sheeting to carry their children and few possessions. Others put their children on their shoulders. They had very little to eat, surviving on

what fish they could catch and the ground roots of water lilies. One group of women spoke of staying on the islands for three months but eventually “we realised we could not stay there indefinitely”. Another person, who fled Mayendit on the 11th May, spoke of how – as a group of six households, comprising 36 children, 20 men and 18 women – they moved from island to island, always being pursued, finally arriving in Nyal in the first week of September. Similarly, the Nonviolent Peaceforce assessment in Leer and Thonyor describes people being displaced to Thonyor and the islands during the initial offensives and often being forced deeper into the swamps for days and weeks on end, only returning to their dwellings on the islands at night when it was deemed safe.¹⁹ One group of women and children who were interviewed as part of the research took five days by canoe to reach Nyal, with three children dying en route, one of hunger, one of wounds sustained during the initial attack and another of diarrhoea. Sometimes men went looking for canoes and moved families in shifts. Finally, as news came in of people stuck in terrible conditions on the islands, the NGO Norwegian Refugee Council sent out boats to rescue people. By December 2015, the REACH project estimated that there were between 6,000 and 10,000 IDPs in the Greater Nyal area, of which between 1,500 and 2,500 were living on the islands.²⁰ At the time of this research most of them had left the islands to attend the WFP registration in Nyal town, but makeshift shelters were clearly visible and one island visited had a newly-installed water point, although the other lacked both safe water and sanitation. IDPs on the islands spoke of getting help from existing residents, mostly people who had fled Nyal town in the fighting the previous May and who had not returned back to their homes. Meanwhile other IDPs made their way back north, walking at night, hiding in the day and finally circling round to find ways back into the POC site avoiding SPLA soldiers. Still others went north to Sudan, mostly it was said to Khartoum or Kharasana (although the statistics show significant refugee populations in White Nile state).²¹ Some of them were people who still had relatives in Khartoum, and it was reported that sometimes children were able to get education alongside Sudanese children.

Nyal itself has become something of a hub, with many activities co-ordinated from there and chiefs say they visit regularly to adjudicate disputes. Although most of the displaced are from Unity, people have also come from Fangak and Bor (Jonglei) and even Juba.

4. *Livelihoods, food insecurity, economic issues and trade*

Nyal’s food scarcity problems pre-date the current conflict, although they have certainly been exacerbated by it. Flooding in 2013 (and again 2014 and 2015) wiped out cultivation and a key request from the community is for support to reconstruct the dyke, which protects agricultural land. Most of the cattle were also said to have been lost long ago, to raids from Lakes state, and the few that were left were looted in the attack on Nyal (very few cattle were seen at the time of the visit). There is also a problem of no veterinary drugs, as before the conflict these were supplied by the government. The food situation was made worse by the fact that the 2015 attack on Nyal came just at the time of the planting season, so even the host community did not cultivate, although some say they will plant this season. The host community is also happy to give IDPs land to cultivate, the problem is that they have no seeds and tools – even hoes were looted – but people say they will share what they have. In the absence of cattle and cultivation, people survive by hunting, fishing (the area is abundant in fish, although fishing is seasonal) and women collect firewood to sell in the market, leaving early in the morning and walking for two hours to reach the forest. They also make charcoal.

Food security is also a problem in other parts of Unity and most recent arrivals in Bentiu, both the town and the POC site, have come because of lack of food rather than due to insecurity. At the time of the research, a large group of women and children had come down from Mayom in order to register with WFP.

Trade

Prior to December 2013, trade routes from Nyal ran mostly to Juba, and even beyond to Kampala. With the onset of the conflict, the government blocked traders from accessing Juba, and later the river port of Taiyer was also attacked. Substituting for the closure of the Juba route – and the impossibility of trading up the river to Malakal or up through Bentiu to Khartoum – a new route has opened up to Duk county, via Mayen. Relations between Duk and this part of Unity state are strong. Many of the people in Duk county trace their origins to the eastwards expansion of the Nuer and are bilingual in Nuer and Dinka. There has been much intermarriage and good relations are maintained. Duk traders have access to Juba and bring up goods that are then taken on to Nyal. But trade is discreet (“a kind of smuggling”)

and it is not clear how much it could be extended. Traders say they buy the things the community wants – mainly sugar, oil, rice, beans, sorghum, maize flour and salt – and all sell out quickly. The journey across to Duk takes three days in each direction and the small size of canoes limits what can be brought. It is, inevitably given the distances involved, an expensive route but supported by the Mercy Corps (DFID-funded) programme it keeps the market stocked with essentials. The traders are also part of the local community and never left the town when it was attacked (some, indeed, took up arms to defend it), so they could supply food faster than NGOs. Prices are, however, higher than before and South Sudan's parlous economic situation will almost inevitably mean they will rise further. Similarly it is reported that trade has opened up from Adok (Leer county) to Mayen and Duk.²²

Unlike in the Shilluk areas of Upper Nile, no money transfer services had started up and although money was both received and sent out, people did this by using trusted travellers, who would then send it through the money transfer systems in Juba.

5. *Humanitarian and community responses and protection issues*

The POC site

For many IDPs the Bentiu POC site has come to represent a prison. Everyone spoken to as part of this research said they wished to leave just as soon as it was safe to do so. This doesn't mean that they were not grateful for the sanctuary it gave them, nor for the infrastructural work done to lift them out of the water in the rainy season, far from it, but they stressed they wanted to be independent, to be able to go home and make their lives again. Over and over again, people spoke of the need for peace. As one said, "there is no point your feeding us today and then they kill us tomorrow".

The POC site is overcrowded, most people have nothing to do and, although it is better than risking violence outside, it is not a safe place and even men feel a need to be inside their tukuls by 8.00pm.²³ At more than 100,000 people, Bentiu POC site is the size of a town and yet it has no government authority that can maintain the rule of law; the UN does not have the mandate to try people in court and sanction them and the traditional authorities are not able to adequately deal with the problems of violence in the site. The result is that gangs roam with impunity, levels of recorded rape are high and many South Sudanese are concerned about a breakdown in cultural norms with too many people crowded together and nothing to control their behaviour. There are primary schools in each of the six sectors but no secondary school and no vocational training programmes.

Food rations are more regular than in the rural areas but still not enough to meet needs unless people have some other means of gaining an income. Depending on the security situation, women will go out to collect firewood and a considerable amount of trading goes on in the camp. There was not time to understand properly the dynamics of this trading but a common supply route seemed to be through Abyei and Mayom to Bentiu, and at least some of the traders were Darfuri. It was said that militia and the SPLA army controlled the smuggling of goods into South Sudan and that it was "not possible to simply be a businessman".²⁴ It was also said that only those linked to government could do business in the POC site.

For all its limitations, the POC site has become a necessary coping strategy for many of the most vulnerable, as documented in a recent UN report.²⁵ The recent UNHCR mission to Mayom and Mankien also reports how parents had left the children behind to go to the POC site to borrow food rations from their relatives who are registered in Bentiu.²⁶ This will continue to be needed until such time as there is a significant and lasting improvement in security.

Community response in Nyal

In contrast to the POC site, IDPs in Nyal are not visible because everyone has been integrated into the community. The response has been extraordinary. IDPs spoke of incredible acts of generosity: people gave them a place to stay, shared their kitchens, found food, clothes, shoes. Some were relatives but many said they knew no one.²⁷ They came with nothing – desperately hungry, wet, tired – and people just took them in. One man, who had come from Mayendit, spoke of how he was walking along the road towards Nyal, knowing no one, and met "a samaritan" who took him home, and how he now knows everyone and feels very comfortable in Nyal. Another spoke of how: "They don't want IDPs to be alone". The host community itself made light of its generosity, seeing it as in no way remarkable but simply "Nuer culture". Interviewing recipients of Mercy Corp's cash transfer programme, none of them mentioned hosting IDPs and it was only when specifically asked that it came out that all of them

had another family living with them. One chief spoke of hosting three families: “whatever little food we have we share”, he said, “we hunt together, fish together”. Another recounted how he heard a knock at the door one night, it was raining and there was a husband, wife and three children. He took them in and the husband has now gone back to Adok to look for his cattle, which he will sell to provide money for all. The kindness happened despite the fact that the host community itself had lost animals in the attack on Nyal and some had seen their buildings burned and goods looted, but even though they had very little themselves they just took it as normal that they would share. In turn, as they got established, IDPs shared back whatever they could – be it labour or the results of a distribution of food or other items. Residents of Nyal also said they were happy to give IDPs land for cultivation and to build tukuls but that they lacked seeds and tools.

As in the POC site, people stressed they wanted to be independent, to be able to go home and make their lives again. They did not want to be dependent on humanitarian assistance for the long term: “we need to be independent and to get our own food rather than being dependent on assistance”. The most common request was for better access to education. This was followed by requests for plastic sheets as people were unwilling to make the commitment to rebuild with natural materials in case buildings were burned down again.

WFP rations, although certainly valued – people walked for hours to get registered – were too little and too infrequent to be a major source of food. For some they were supplemented by the Mercy Corps cash transfer programme, which was liked by both traders and beneficiaries (traders from Leer are now asking for a similar programme). This was started before the wave of IDPs came to Nyal and was aimed at vulnerable residents, although, as with everything else, its benefits were shared more widely. Interestingly, all of those interviewed (it should be noted that this was not an evaluation of the programme, so this is in no sense a representative sample) used the cash mainly to invest in the long term rather than for immediate consumption. One woman spent the first two months’ cash on reconstructing her house as it had been burned down in the fighting and then on school fees for her daughter in Kenya; she met her basic food needs by collecting wild foods from the forest and stretching out her WFP ration. Another, a disabled man, said he spent some on food but then bought a goat, which has just given birth to a kid, and also bought some chickens. A third used the cash initially for funeral expenses for her deceased husband and then bought two goats and also used it to keep her children in primary school in Nyal. Mercy Corps staff noted how after the attack on Nyal the market was completely devoid of goods and with many shops destroyed, and how the cash transfer scheme had been instrumental in helping it start functioning again.

6. Returns

All interviewees were quite clear about the conditions under which they would return: that a transitional government needed to be formed; Riek Machar should return to Juba; the SPLA should move out of the towns; there should be an end to security incidents; and there should be justice for those who had ordered the killings. One person said, “IDPs cannot tell you when they will return, everything is determined by peace”. Another that: “the issue is not the peace it is the SPLA soldiers, we cannot return until the SPLA soldiers are moved”. People’s attitudes also varied depending on what they had been through. Those who had seen many relatives killed were unsurprisingly reluctant to risk more: “you have seen such bad things, military killing people in front of you. It is too soon to go back.” People also spoke of going in a phased way, parents first to construct shelters and check on the situation, the family to follow later.

In general, interviewees in the POC site all said they wanted to go back to where they were living before the conflict and to re-establish their livelihoods there, the only one who said otherwise was a widow who felt she could not re-establish herself in Bentiu having lost her husband and therefore wished to go back to Mayom, where her parents still were and where they had land. In Nyal the situation was less clear, partly because a number of areas had been abandoned even before the current fighting because of repeat raids from Lakes state, and some areas had not been repopulated since people fled in the civil war of the 1990s. One chief identified two categories of IDPs: those who originally came from Nyal but had gone to places like Juba and Malakal for work, and these he felt would now stay in Nyal; and those not from Nyal, whom he felt would return once they felt safe to do so. His estimate was that there were approximately 8,000 households originally from Nyal and

another 3,000 from Mayendit and Leer. Help will be needed for people to return to Leer, Koch and Mayendit, particularly as the low levels of confidence in the peace agreement mean they are unlikely to go back in time for this season's planting period. Most homes have been destroyed and rebuilding will be a major task. Many people also came on foot through the swamps and cannot be expected to return the same way, so transport support will be needed. They will need help to rebuild and to re-establish livelihoods, including the difficult issue of what to do about looted cattle. Some people spoke of the need for compensation for looted cattle, and how raiding would occur if this was not given. Others spoke of the need to get the youth on board, to sensitise them about peace, to build relationships with neighbouring communities, "youth has to be part of peace, part of resolving the problem". Many spoke strongly of the need to re-establish education: most children currently have no access to education, as schools have shut because of the conflict; for many there is no access to books or to writing materials, although some are learning under trees.

Recently there have been a few cautious moves back into towns, with 18,000 registered in Bentiu and approximately 8,000 in Rubkona. Many of these are recent arrivals from Mayom, mainly women and children who were living in Bentiu or Rubkona at the outbreak of conflict and then fled back to their home area of Mayom. They are living in the ruins of buildings or in makeshift shelters and all those spoken to said they would try and stay there and re-establish their lives. The option of a food distribution outside the POC site, the presence of agencies and of the UNMISS Ghanaian battalion all seemed to be factors that made them think it was a viable option, and better than the POC site. But Mayom is also Bul Nuer land and many Bul militia have fought with the SPLA, so it may be that people from Mayom feel less vulnerable than those from many other locations.

At the time of the research, there was also a steady stream of people travelling by foot between Bentiu town and the POC site, mostly returning to the POC site at night. These were mainly women and children – the only men that felt safe to go seemed to be those who had some connection to the government or the SPLA. None of the men interviewed in the POC site said they would feel safe to go out, not even those who were agency staff and could travel there and back in an agency vehicle. In part, the increased confidence about going into Bentiu is due to the new SPLA Divisional Commander who has made a massive difference to the security situation in town; but he was out of town at the time of the research visit and there was much speculation as to whether he would come back or whether he was being replaced, perhaps with the old Commander coming back.

In addition, interviewees in Nyal said a few people had gone back to Leer, partly, it seems, because of the presence of UNMISS Mongolian battalion and of some agencies. Others, however, didn't believe UNMISS could protect them and remembered how UNMISS bases in Bor and Akobo had been breached. Mostly, people felt it was too soon to go back to Leer and there was a fear that they would be suspected of supporting the SPLM-IO, even if they did not take part in the fighting. Nonviolent Peaceforce missions to Leer county in December and January noted an increased civilian presence in Thonyor over the four weeks, with the market growing steadily and within close proximity to a newly-constructed NGO compound. However, few civilians had returned to Leer town; they would walk into town to receive services but they would rarely stay overnight. Most said they would not stay in town unless the government commissioner and the SPLA left.²⁸ They were, however, clear that they wanted to stay in the area and did not want to go to the POC site. No one spoke of people going back to Koch or Mayendit other than to "look, see" and return. According to Oxfam, which has been undertaking emergency water and sanitation projects on the islands, these have emptied a lot compared to a few months ago, but it is not clear if that is just people coming to Nyal or if some have returned to their home areas – or simply gone elsewhere. Koch, Leer and Mayendit remain divided between government and SPLM/A-IO zones of control and many community structures have not re-established themselves since the fighting. Recent Nonviolent Peaceforce missions found no traditional courts operating, no elders and no women's associations, although some church groups had re-organised quickly and were active.²⁹ Given the divided nature of control it is more than possible that the situation will be complicated by parallel structures being set up on the government and SPLM/A-IO sides.

Lack of access to accurate information on the situation in their home area was an issue for everyone. Most IDPs said they got their information from either radio – with Radio Tamazuj, the BBC and VoA being trusted – or from people travelling. Some would send family members to go and find out the situation. No one trusted information from government sources, or sources felt to be near the government – which included sites such as Gurtong – and many did not trust Radio Miraya.

Report of visit to Jonglei

1. Areas visited

Five areas were visited during the Jonglei trip: Mingkaman settlement and IDP camp in Awerial (Lakes State but linked to displacement from Bor and surrounding areas); Bor town; Akobo; Maar and Panyagor in Twic East county; as well as Poktap and Duk Padiet in Duk county. Attempted visits to Pajut, a settlement on the Duk-Wuror border, and Ayueldit, in Duk, were cancelled for security reasons. Meetings were held with state officials and legislators; county and payam officials; public sector manual workers; South Sudanese and foreign humanitarian workers and peacekeeping officials; representatives of different displaced groups (such as new arrivals, camp and town populations) and host communities; people involved in the cattle economy; university and school teaching staff; healthcare workers; mobile phone companies; traditional authorities; cattle keepers and forest dwellers; White Army members; traders; and church leaders and parishioners. These meetings are not necessarily representative of the population – most were held with males aged between 25 and 50.

The areas visited appeared mostly stable at the time of visiting, apart from some observed incidents of insecurity on the roads around Poktap and in Akobo market, but there were significant differences between each area:

- Control of Bor shifted between the SPLM/A-IO and the government several times at the start of the current conflict, but since government forces re-established their hold on the town in early 2014, it has been slowly recovering. Displaced people moved towards Mingkaman, Juba, Equatoria and East Africa. Mingkaman and Bor are now towns where populations and markets are growing rapidly.
- Twic East county escaped attack during the battles for Bor that marked the start of the conflict. But since early 2014, areas of Twic East have undergone several episodes of displacement as a result of the conflict between the government and SPLM/A-IO and also as a result of inter-communal raiding arising out of the social crisis in Jonglei which pre-dates the current conflict. Twic East people have moved to Bor and Mingkaman and further afield.
- Duk county was not much affected by the Bor conflict of December 2013-January 2014. Government forces and their allies began pushing SPLM/A-IO forces northwards in early 2014, from the strategic crossroads of Gadiang, eventually capturing Ayod town to the north of Duk and cutting off SPLM/A-IO forces in Duk county from their bases in the east. SPLM/A-IO forces destroyed most settlements and displaced most people to Bor, Mingkaman and further afield. Much of the Duk population is bilingual in Nuer and Dinka, and some people identifying as Lou Nuer live in the eastern payam of Panyang, where the border is contested with neighbouring Uror, a predominantly Lou Nuer county. Panyang people were divided by the conflict and most of them moved as IDPs to the destroyed settlements in Duk county. Since the August 2015 peace agreement, IDPs from Lou Nuer areas of Uror and Gaawar Nuer areas of Ayod have moved to Duk county in search of food and markets.
- Akobo lies on the Ethiopian border and was a remote and economically depressed area of Jonglei state during the post-CPA crises in Jonglei, which lasted between 2006 and 2013. It is now an important SPLM/A-IO town with a market that is a destination for Ethiopian imports. The area has no lorries to move goods inland and so the presence of commodities and relief goods mean that it attracts hungry people from areas to the west. It has avoided capture by government forces. SPLM/A-IO officials stated that the government had unsuccessfully tried to mount an attack on Akobo from Gadiang in August 2014, supported by Murle irregular forces from Likonguele.

2. Perceptions of the current conflict

Jonglei has not seen much peace since the CPA. Many of its armed groups were made up of civilians and were not included in the 2006 Juba Declaration, which incorporated most Khartoum-aligned militias into the SPLA. Instead, Jonglei witnessed harsh disarmament campaigns from late 2005, which the SPLA forces organised around ethnicity, with Lou and Gaawar Nuer groups being disarmed

first. The coercive process left some ethnic communities with more arms than others – many felt that Murle were left at an advantage. SPLA commanders later tried to redress the perceived ethnic imbalances in armament, by giving weapons to civilians from Nyandit payam (the Akobo payam bordering Greater Pibor). These imbalances aggravated a deep social crisis in Jonglei that had its roots in the inability of the government to provide any peace dividends to populations remote from Bor and the highly uneven distribution of infrastructure and markets across the state. This crisis led, in 2009, to several years of massive inter-communal raiding – and also contributed to the very rapid SPLM/A-IO mobilization in Jonglei in 2013.

Today there is still more than one conflict in Jonglei, and the low-level conflict between the government and the SPLM/A-IO may not be the most destructive of them. For over a year, local people and local leaderships have been taking initiatives for peace and reconciliation across the Nuer–Dinka divides – many of these initiatives are clustered around the bilingual county of Duk, which has long functioned as a zone of Nuer–Dinka social encounters. In February 2016, Lou Nuer and Gaawar Nuer people were moving into Duk in search of markets and relief food. Some Duk people believed that relationships between Nuer sections were even more complicated than their relationships in Duk. Many Dinka interviewees welcomed their arrival, but believed that Nuer IDPs should express remorse for the actions of the SPLM/A-IO. During the visit of Philip Aguer, the highly-regarded new governor of the new state of Jonglei (made up of the counties of Bor, Twic East and Duk), Nuer participants were invited to speak at his rallies, but nearly all declined to do so – perhaps feeling that unilateral remorse might miss some of the truth of what has happened.

The conflict between Murle and Lou Nuer raiders is no longer played out in massive cattle raids as it was in 2012 but there are still regular raids and abductions targeting all the different communities of Jonglei. These are often characterized as ‘Murle raids’. For example, a lone soldier on patrol was encountered during a trip from Poktap to Duk Padiet in Duk county in February 2016. His hand had been grazed by a bullet. He said that his attacker was a criminal, and then in the same sentence described his attacker as Murle. It was not clear how he might have determined the ethnicity of his attacker, and his remark suggested that criminal raiding is routinely attributed to Murle raiders, or to the Murle people as a whole.

Associating one of Jonglei’s smaller ethnic groups with a multidimensional crisis of cattle raiding may be a misrepresentation. Jonglei’s raiding problem has many resemblances with raiding problems in other parts of South Sudan, where there are practically no Murle people involved in the cattle economy. Other Jonglei groups raid, and, although raiders often form groups from networks based on kinship or age-sets, raiders are by no means corporate representatives of an ethnic group. Simon Harragin quotes a woman in Greater Bor who says that contemporary raiding may be linked to changing marriage patterns. The need for cattle bridewealth forces many women into betrothal with men whom they do not love, and this can lead to elopements or messy divorces – where bridewealth cattle has to be recovered from a wide kinship network and returned to the bride’s family. This escalates tensions within Dinka sections. Describing the situation in Twic East, Harragin says: “This violence committed between Dinka youth – within villages or between sections – provides the platform from which violence escalates to a higher level. For, in some ways, the very efforts of the elders, to stigmatise violence between groups that are neighbours or relations pushes the youth to find a group that they can raid with a clear conscience; this therefore displaces the problem of cattle and territory that cause the violence in the first place rather than *solving* it. This causes a kind of opportunistic ‘tribal solidarity’ when a common enemy is identified – either when raided or doing the raiding.”³⁰ Such versions of ‘tribal’ solidarity are then politically instrumentalised by more powerful forces. They appear in areas like Duk, where, since 1991, extensive, scattered settlements have been replaced by nucleated villages as a result of rural violence and displacement. Raiding takes place in this emptied landscape, where people no longer walk at night.

These raids may not be as ‘inter-communal’ as they appear – they may be an expression of a multidimensional social crisis that cannot be readily reduced to ethnicity. Another expression of that social crisis is the spread of deaths as a result of inter-communal feuds. The president of the customary court in Akobo East said that he had dealt with 70 revenge cases in 2015. Akobo East is a new county made up of four payams that had a population of 82,615 in the 2008 census. This suggests a murder rate about 30 per cent higher than that of Cape Town in South Africa (59.9

homicides per 100,000 of population in 2007, which makes the city the ‘murder capital of Africa’ in journalistic rendering).³¹ “Revenge attacks are increasing, and guns are always used” said one interviewee in Akobo.

During the two-week interviewing period, there were raids in Duk and Akobo, which reportedly killed seven people and resulted in the loss of over 4,000 cattle. Raiding undermines economic recovery by preventing people from cultivating and it also causes displacement. For example, a raid on Jalle payam in Bor county and another in Pakeer payam in Twic East in late 2015 sent between 10,000 and 40,000 people into displacement in Mingkaman. The numbers are disputed, because none of those displaced people have received rations since their arrival over three months ago, in part because humanitarian agencies there believe that movements are linked to food security rather protection. In Akobo, one displaced woman described her flight from Bor to Gadiang, where her husband was killed in a Murle raid in June 2014. She then went to Kaikuiny in Akobo West, where two of her children aged six and three were abducted in what she described as a Murle raid. She moved to Akobo town in October 2015 and has not yet received any relief. She collects firewood for survival.

The 28 states

“[The new states will keep Murle, Nuer and Dinka people apart] This may lead to people fighting more within their territorial boundaries. MPs will be closer to them. They won’t be disconnected during rains. If people are angry, they will be angry with them. So Kiir transferred the problem from the capital to the people.”

—(Interview with a county official in Bor, January 2016)

President Kiir divided South Sudan’s 10 states into 28 in a highly controversial 2015 decree the implementation of which began in 2016 – and which may yet be repealed. The new governor of the new state of Jonglei (comprised of Bor, Twic East and Duk counties) made a tour of the area and was received with a great deal of enthusiasm, even in Duk where most of the population are Nuer. One clergyman in Duk stated, however, that he thought the new administrative system would entrench ethnic tensions (see section, ‘Displacement and government coercion: the 1930s’).

The SPLM/A-IO has rejected the administrative division, but its own experience sets out interesting precedents. Its initial manifesto was ‘federalism,’ with a policy of dividing the 10 states into 21 (along the lines of the old colonial-era districts). Riek Machar, the SPLM/A-IO leader, has long argued that the proliferation of administrative headquarters in rural South Sudan is a way to attract development. His argument is that a new county town will get a new secondary school. That argument has been weakened by the catastrophic fall in government revenue.

In 2013, there were three Lou Nuer counties – Akobo, Nyirol and Uror. These counties have been divided into 10, which make up the new Bieh state. (Bieh state enjoyed a prior existence at the end of the twentieth century, when Riek Machar’s set up a new administration there just prior to his return to the SPLA). Counties have been subdivided into payams. For example, Akobo East county was made up of four of the eight payams of the 2013 Akobo county – Bilkay, Nyandit, Dengjok and Alali. In 2015, the government created Gaagdong payam out of northern Dengjok, and Pultuak payam out of southern Nyandit. County divisions have increased posts for both officials and chiefs. But they have not led to the arrival of new services. The two new payams each have a Primary Healthcare Unit, but both units existed before the payam was constructed.

3. Complex patterns of displacement

Many people interviewed had long personal histories of displacement and could compare different experiences in their own lifetime. Displacement had different causes, triggers and takes different forms and it is difficult to classify experiences fairly.

Movements are hard to summarize and this list is only partial:

- Bor people have moved to swamps, Mingkaman, Juba and East African cities. Some have moved with cattle to Equatorial pastures. In some cases, moves to cities are linked to educational careers. Their movement was triggered by the SPLM/A-IO attack on Bor.

- Twic East people have followed similar patterns to those of Bor. Their movements were triggered by a Murle attack on Pakeer payam in November 2013.
- Duk people have moved their cattle to Twic. 'Duk' means sandy wooded ridge and Duk people have a preference for sandy ridges, which can be found in Twic too. Their movements were triggered by attacks from a routed SPLM/A-IO in April 2014.
- People from Duk county's predominantly Nuer payam of Panyang moved to Poktap, a Duk town functioning as the county's temporary headquarters. Their movement was triggered by internal conflicts over chiefship, which began in 2011 but were dramatically politicized by the December 2013 rebellion.
- People from Lou Nuer areas of Uror and Gaawar Nuer areas of Ayod have been moving to Duk county since the government and SPLM/A-IO signed a peace deal in August 2015. Their moves are linked to searches for food and markets, after two years of very poor harvests, resulting from poor rains and conflict.
- People are moving to Akobo because of food crises in Lou Nuer areas. Akobo has a functioning supply line to Ethiopia but no lorries to move food inland. In addition, Nuer urban populations are moving to Akobo because of targeted killings in towns that began in December 2013. People began moving from Nyandit payam to Akobo in 2009, as a result of inter-communal violence. In addition to Nuer groups, interviewees reported that there are some Shilluk and Pigi Dinka groups in Akobo, who may have come to SPLM/A-IO areas as a result of past efforts to widen the ethnic base of the opposition movement.
- Akobo was, until the 1980s, a predominantly Anuak town. Since then, Anuak people have been displaced from the town to Ethiopia as a result of ethnic tensions. Two violent incidents in 2015 led nearly all of them to leave. They have moved to camps in Gambela People's Region, a region of Ethiopia where Anuak and Nuer refugees from South Sudan live in close proximity to Anuak and Nuer citizens of Ethiopia. Tensions between the two communities echo over the border: interviewees described refugee camps in Ethiopia as "in the Anuak area" or "on the border between Nuer and Anuak areas".
- In Greater Bor, many people are still moving to swamps and islands. A payam official in Twic East believed that more people had moved to islands than had moved to the IDP settlement at Mingkaman (Awerial, Lakes state). Some interviewees who had lived on islands said that they had spent several months begging for a boat.

In the Jonglei hinterlands, people still run to *toics* as a first refuge and many people are living in forests. During the research visit to Akobo, the town was filled with young men in fatigues, some of them with hair braided with beads. A government official said that several thousand White Army personnel had recently come to town. The White Army is a term that arose in 1991 to describe armed Nuer civilians, mobilized in relatively large forces for raiding or participation in armed conflict. The White Army is a relatively recent phenomenon but its organisation overlaps with the traditional Nuer system of sections, or *ciengs*. White Army groups are often led by a *kuar bunam* or elected youth leader. But the term does not denote an institution, rather it refers to an organisational style or repertoire that has evolved around the conflicts of the last 25 years.

Five of these young men were interviewed and they said that they belonged to two groups of about five people, one from Nyirol and the other from Uror. They were aged between 25 and 40 years and were married with children. They did not have a *kuar bunam*. They had been living in the forest since May 2015 and have little or no contact with their children and wives. Both groups said that they had lost cattle in Murle raids. They all bore signs of malnutrition. It may be that these groups are following a style of survival displacement similar to that of people who flee to swamps.

Some male and female household heads in Mingkaman reported that they were looking after many orphans. Sudan's 2006 household survey found that between 14 and 20 per cent of children in Jonglei, Unity and Upper Nile states had lost one parent, and between two and four per cent had lost both.³² One woman of middle years said that some orphans had died for lack of food. Some are traumatized. Older relatives are not always able to care for them and younger relatives may not have the time to care for them.

4. *Livelihoods, food insecurity, economic issues and trade*

Like displacement histories, livelihoods strategies and food insecurity are difficult to generalize. General food distributions are very irregular but they are enough of an incentive to bring people from food insecure areas to distribution points, and sometimes to settle by those distribution points. Some interviewees argue that the SPLM-IO refuses to allow cross-line food deliveries and prefers that people travel to government areas for food. The movement of Lou Nuer and Gaawar Nuer people into Duk county suggests that food insecurity may be deeper in Nuer areas than neighbouring Duk – in spite of WFP food distribution figures which suggest that larger volumes of food went to Ayod and Uror in 2015. Staple food prices were higher than the five-year average and did not witness seasonal decline in Greater Upper Nile.³³ Displacement may have deepened cash-dependency in Greater Upper Nile, which had, since 2004, recorded the highest cereal deficits in Southern Sudan.³⁴ Malnutrition rates recorded in Ministry of Health surveys in 2015 found rates of Global Acute Malnutrition of between 20 and 34 per cent in Greater Upper Nile, significantly higher than the rest of the country.³⁵

Interviewees described the last two harvests as poor. The area planted was below average, rainfall was erratic and seasonal tasks were disrupted by insecurity. Yet a lot depends on reviving cultivation. Humanitarian agencies are, in many places, limiting rations and the possibility of cultivating one's own lands is a key part of the returns propaganda disseminated by state governments. Cultivation might also be a way to absorb the productive energies of young people, currently engaged in non-productive or destructive activities. Governments look to cultivation as a means to extract taxation, and international organisations look to it as a means to spread market relations in subsistence societies. But there are many obstacles to agricultural development, aside from the problems of insecurity. Cultivating for markets requires demand and demand requires liquidity – neither is much in evidence in many parts of Jonglei. Many young people in pastoralist communities come from cultures that see cultivation as an activity of middle and even older age, not of youth. In Poktap, for example, young people are in school, or in barracks or wandering the market looking for work. One teacher in his early twenties explained that some young people prefer the town, have no facility for cattle keeping or fishing, fear insecurity and miss town pleasures such as cigarettes. This group of people finance their lifestyles by begging for cattle from their fathers, and selling them in Bor. Changing such work cultures will not be easy, particularly as South Sudan has developed a highly segmented labour market – a labour market made up of non-competing groups. So, for example, the hotel and construction sectors are dominated by East African workers; according to one interviewee even the latrines in Mingkaman were dug by East African workers.

Survival work cultures still exist, however. Women interviewed in several locations said that they had spent seven out of the past seven days gathering firewood, sometimes despite illness. They earned 25-30 SSP a day for work that could last up to eight hours. Hunters in forests are also engaged in arduous and risky work. There were also anecdotal reports of the spread of prostitution in IDP settlements.

The cattle economy is difficult to study in South Sudan. Some areas reported significant cattle losses during, or before, the December 2013 crisis. People are moving cattle to very distant pastures, including in places like Uganda and Ethiopia, and this has many implications for household economic strategies. Displacement is concentrating cattle and probably contributing to the spread of East Coast Fever, which spreads to uninfected populations with devastating speed, dramatically increases mortality and decreases milk yields, and is very costly to treat. These characteristics mean that cattle keepers will often respond chaotically to the appearance of the disease. Rapid flight from disease-hit areas can, itself, exacerbate conflict – quarantine of cattle in Awerial has caused violence.

The cattle trade displays great regional unevenness. The lack of liquidity and demand in SPLM/A-IO areas has depressed sales. A cattle market official in Akobo reported one sale in the past month. In contrast, Awerial cattle market staff reported 40-100 sales a week. Ayod and Uror people needing to sell cattle trek it to Duk and then sell it to drovers working trade routes to Bor and Juba. Some communities who have lost cattle are restocking through purchase, but other communities may restock through raiding.

5. Humanitarian and community responses

Humanitarian responses to this complicated crisis were confusing. Food distribution is uneven and in the biggest IDP settlements humanitarian actors are seeking to limit entitlement and push people towards ‘development programmes’ – which are generally described as production for markets. Government and aid officials invoked the fear of relief dependency to explain plans for ration reduction, although it is hard to see how displaced people can depend on relief food or, indeed, any other single food source in current conditions. There was little awareness of the literature examining the issue of relief dependency in South Sudan.³⁶

Some agencies have developed quite complex, extempore programmes that aim to meet needs as they emerge. The US-supported Jonglei Food Security Programme, provides food distribution, local savings and insurance schemes, small ruminant loans and other responses tailored to local conditions. The programme has a large, locally recruited staff and this enhances understanding of local needs.

Community responses

Solidarity is one of the main mechanisms by which South Sudanese people survive protracted displacement. Displaced people not on ration registers beg food from neighbours. Many people use kinship networks to get accommodation. One woman in her late fifties or early sixties described her situation. She is married to another woman and they have two sons and a daughter aged under six.³⁷ She was displaced herself as a child, from Padoi in Akobo West, after they lost all their cattle in a raid carried out by northern Sudanese; and again as an adult in 1991. She feels bad about people being displaced. She has five women staying with her, from Panyagor, in Twic East. They arrived in June 2014 after a month in the bush. They fled on the Bor–Akobo road and when they came they asked for her. One of the women is a first cousin and the rest she described as “all Nuer”. The women have ten children between them. None of them are working. She has a small piece of land but last year she lost the crop because of the rains. She doesn’t have enough land and people are afraid to go into the bush. They want to stay in Akobo till peace comes.

6. Returns

Officials in SPLM/A-IO and government areas both advocated returns to rural areas. One official in Bor said that displaced people:

“...will be settled centrally in bomas, not in homestead fashion, but in centralized villages with cultivation outside the village perimeter, because of security. People are going back to self-reliance.”

Officials in Bor and Duk said that state policy on displacement was to provide adequate security in rural areas so that people would return, and to advocate for support for reintegration from NGOs.

In Akobo, an official stated that there was no current policy on returns, but rural people will need to return to rural areas if they cannot find jobs in towns. Officials in Akobo were not aware of the 2015 South Sudan Resettlement Strategy published by the SPLM/A-IO’s Relief Organization for South Sudan (which envisages urban as well as rural livelihoods support for returnees).

IDPs and local officials concurred on the need for support for the transportation of returnees. But some IDPs expressed scepticism about villagization policies: “Those politicians who want us to go to the village, their children are in London”, said one. Most were acutely aware of continuing rural insecurity.

Fears about security are appropriate. For example, many people fled Pakeer payam in Twic East in November 2015 after an attack allegedly carried out by Nuer raiders. Payam officials said that, at the time of the raid, the payam had 12 unarmed police officers, one of whom was killed in the raid. Now it has only ten.

The new governor of the new state of Jonglei (Bor, Twic East and Duk) made local security one of the themes of his inaugural trip in February 2016. He promised that each payam will recruit a community police force of 200 youths; they will be paid by local people. A decision on whether or not they will be given arms is pending. They will report to the local chief, who reports to the commissioner. This strategy has several self-evident risks.

Endnotes

- 1 Interview with humanitarian worker, Malakal, 2 February 2016.
- 2 For more, see various reports on Upper Nile from the Small Arms Survey; and Dr. Lam Akol, *Collo Boundary Dispute*, (UK, South Sudan Publishing Company, November 2015).
- 3 Following the outbreak of fighting in Malakal, on 25 December 2015 the SPLA's 7th Division Brigade, based in Fashoda, initially split peacefully between Dinka and Nuer soldiers. Johnson Olony reportedly mediated between the two sides in order to avoid fighting. Reported in: Small Arms Survey, "Timeline of recent Intra-Southern Fighting", published 27 June 2014. Available at: <http://www.smallarmssurveysudan.org/fileadmin/docs/documents/HSBA-South-Sudan-Crisis-Timeline.pdf>
- 4 Radio Tamazuj, "Aid workers struggle in Malakal Chaos; number of wounded tops 90", Radio Tamazuj, 19 February 2016, available at <https://radiotamazuj.org/en/article/aid-workers-struggle-malakal-chaos-number-wounded-tops-90>
- 5 See "South Sudan's ethnic Shilluk overthrew King over 28 States", *Sudan Tribune*, 17 January 2016, available at <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article57710>
- 6 The community of Nuer in New Paloich are living under the protection of the local SPLA commander, Maj. Gen. Nhial Batong, a Nuer who remained with the SPLA following the 2013 crisis. Batong arranged for this community of Nuer, who hail from Ulang County and had been working for the oil companies at the time of the crisis, to be brought (along with their families) to New Paloich school, where they have remained under his protection.
- 7 When violence spread to Pigi and Baliyet counties, the Melut Commissioner sent vehicles to pick up IDPs. Danish Refugee Council, *Site Profile: Melut IDP Sites*, updated 3 January, 2016.
- 8 Interview in Malek IDP camp, 27 January 2016.
- 9 For example, we met with members of Lelo village, south of Wau Shilluk, which had been captured by the SPLA in April 2015, who are now settled by village section within the IDP community in Wau Shilluk. In April 2015, the SPLA crossed the river from Malakal and captured the Aguelek military headquarters in Awarajok, as well as the villages of Kwoko, Lelo, Oboa and Ditong – which remain under SPLA control today.
- 10 According to UNHCR, as of 1 February 2016, there were 199,608 Southern Sudanese who had arrived in Sudan since the outbreak of conflict in December 2013, of whom 59% were in White Nile state. <http://reliefweb.int/map/sudan/sudan-arrivals-south-sudan-15-december-2013-01-february-2016>
- 11 Interview in Malek IDP camp, 27 January 2016.
- 12 Radio Tamazuj, "SPLA shut down supply route to Malakal protection site", 15 February 2016, available at <https://radiotamazuj.org/en/article/spla-shut-down-supply-route-malakal-protection-site>
- 13 Interview at Wau Shilluk port, 29 January 2016.
- 14 Interview in Wau Shilluk market, 30 January 2016.
- 15 The money transfer companies are: 1) Dier Company; 2) Awlad Kak Adieb Investment Co. Ltd; 3) Wandoch; 4) Abiek Adiang for Investment Co. Ltd.; and 5) Kuleke for Quick Transfer Co.
- 16 Interview in Wau Shilluk, 30 January 2016. The broader point being made was that economic resources are being stretched by the continuation of the conflict. It's unclear what the comment about the stoppage of salaries refers to. Our meeting was on a Saturday, but the official noted that Mondays and Fridays are their busiest days.
- 17 For a detailed discussion of the implications of the 28 states decree on Unity see *The Conflict in Unity State*, Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) for Sudan and South Sudan, (Geneva: Small Arms Survey, March 2016).
- 18 The research schedule did not give long enough on the ground to build the relationships that would have enabled discussions on sexual and gender-based violence, however it is worth noting that approximately 80% of women and girls interviewed by Nonviolent Peaceforce in Leer County reported being survivors of gender-based violence (Nonviolent Peaceforce South Sudan, Protection Report – Leer County, Unity State, February 2016).
- 19 Nonviolent Peaceforce South Sudan, Protection Report – Leer County, Unity State, February 2016, p.5.
- 20 REACH, Situation Overview: Greater Nyal East, South Sudan, December 2015.
- 21 According to UNHCR, as of 1 February 2016 there were 199,608 Southern Sudanese who had arrived in Sudan since the outbreak of conflict in December 2013, of whom 59% were in White Nile state. <http://reliefweb.int/map/sudan/sudan-arrivals-south-sudan-15-december-2013-01-february-2016>

- 22 Interview with Nonviolent Peaceforce, February 2016.
- 23 Until recently there were also problems with people shooting into the POC site from outside but this was said to have stopped with the signing of the peace agreement.. A tukul is a traditional mud and thatch hut.
- 24 The research was undertaken before the Sudan/South Sudan border opened.
- 25 Office of the UN Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator for South Sudan, *Crisis Impacts on Households in Unity State, South Sudan, 2014-2015*, (January 2016).
- 26 UNHCR, Mission Update Mayom and Mankien, (29 January 2016).
- 27 The REACH assessment also indicates that most IDPs did not have relatives in Nyal, although some people spoke of a migration out of Leer to Nyal some 40 years ago.
- 28 Nonviolent Peaceforce South Sudan, *Protection Report – Leer County, Unity State*, February 2016, p.3.
- 29 Interview with Nonviolent Peaceforce, February 2016.
- 30 Simon Harragin, *Background Paper for Bor, Twic, Ghol and Nyaraweng Dinka*, (2012) p.16. Paper delivered at the Jonglei State – Strengthening Conflict Mitigation & Peace-Building Conference, Nairobi, 19-21 March 2012.
- 31 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Global Study on Homicide 2013*, (Vienna: 2014) p.83 & p.145.
- 32 Ministry of Health, Government of Southern Sudan (MOH-GOSS) and the Southern Sudan Commission for Census, Statistics and Evaluation (SSCCSE), *Southern Sudan Household Health Survey*, (Khartoum, 2007), p.138
- 33 Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSNET), *3.5 million People Will Need Emergency Humanitarian Assistance by June*, East Africa South Sudan Food Security Outlook January – September 2015 (2015)
- 34 Southern Sudan Centre for Census, Statistics and Evaluation (SSCCE), *Statistical Yearbook for Southern Sudan*, (Juba, 2010), p.88.
- 35 Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSNET), (2015)
- 36 Sarah Bailey and Simon Harragin, Humanitarian Policy Group, *Food assistance, reintegration and dependency in Southern Sudan: A report commissioned by the World Food Programme*, (London: ODI, 2009).
- 37 Some systems of customary law in South Sudan, and in other parts of Africa, allow for same-sex marriage. Such marriages often take place between a wealthier childless woman and a younger bride. The bride gets pregnant with a boyfriend, but the children are legally those of the wealthier woman who has paid the bridewealth.

Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue
84 Riverside Drive
P.O. Box 14702-00800 Nairobi, Kenya
Tel +254 (0) 20 234 9700
Website: www.hdcentre.org