![acaps]

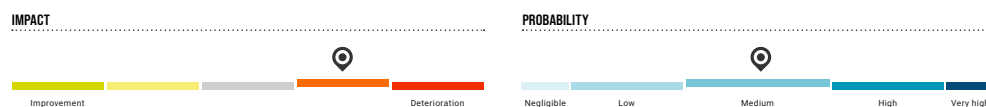# MOVEMENT PATTERNS AND HUMANITARIAN NEEDS IN SOUTH SUDAN:
# SCENARIOS

Possible developments of movement and settlement patterns and humanitarian needs in the next six months after the redesignation of the Protection of Civilians sites.

JANUARY - JUNE 2021

# Scenario 1

## Delayed, gradual decrease in security; increased displacement; decreasing access

**IMPACT**

Improvement — Deterioration

**PROBABILITY**

Negligible — Low — Medium — High — Very high

Initially the refocus of UNMISS mission has negligible impact on the local security situation in the camps as support to the Community Watch Groups (CWGs), SSNP, and military is prioritised enabling the provision of a basic level of protection in and around the displacement sites. Some sites see improved humanitarian access and the local economy improves which, coupled with continued failure to make meaningful progress on HLP rights, attracts increasing numbers of people to the sites. In early 2021 local tensions increase, fuelled by increased competition for jobs and access to humanitarian assistance and rising crime. Security deteriorates rapidly as CWGs become increasingly partisan and state security forces use disproportionate and indiscriminate force. Deployment of the UNMISS QRF reduces although their continued presence prevents any major incidents occurring. Some IDPs are compelled to leave the sites while many that remain are no longer safe: physical and psychological trauma increases. Humanitarian access reduces and operations reduce.
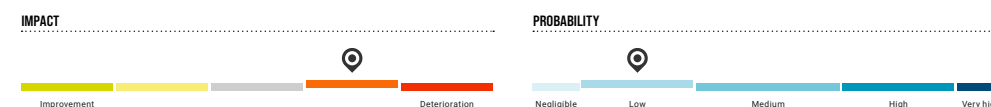
# Scenario 2

## Rapid decrease in security; new displacement; decreased access
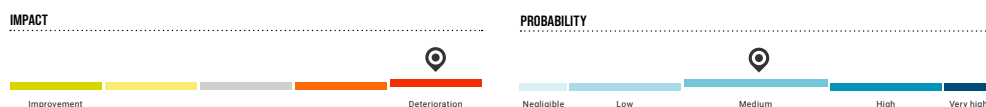
**IMPACT**

Improvement — Deterioration

**PROBABILITY**

Negligible — Low — Medium — High — Very high

Confidence in local governance officials reduces as state and county officials promote divisive policies. This fuels a rise in sub-national organised violence, intercommunal tension, gang activities, and generalised violence. Criminality rises within the sites which steadily fracture into ghettos. Attacks by organised youth groups lead to partial destruction in some of the sites. Lacking ongoing support from UNMISS, the CWGs become partisan and the local security forces lack the unity and capacity to quell the criminal activity. UNMISS does not intervene effectively. As violence increases humanitarian access to the sites is severely restricted, reducing the available services and protection the sites afford. Some IDPs are compelled to leave, seeking safety in the bush, Sudan, or other locations. Those able to leave the camps and those who remain face reduced access to many basic services and an increase in protection risks. The Peace agreement stalls.

# Scenario 3

## Improved security, increased involuntary movement from sites, reduced access

**IMPACT**

Improvement — Deterioration

**PROBABILITY**

Negligible — Low — Medium — High — Very high

Local governance strengthens as all governors are appointed, including in Upper Nile state, and most of them are well perceived and accepted by the local communities. Coupled with effective use of the QRF and ongoing support to the CWGs from UNMISS, this leads to a marked improvement in local security. Meanwhile local authorities seek to encourage movement out of former and current Protection of Civilian (PoC) sites by limiting humanitarian assistance within the sites through increased bureaucracy and tightened security. Some IDPs manage to leave the sites but very rarely are able to return to their place of origin. Seeking to maintain the improved security situation, government-imposed security measures become increasingly restrictive, and governance increasingly authoritarian, freedom of movement for humanitarians reduces as does humanitarian access. Responding to the urgent needs resulted from new displacements, mainly protection needs, is a priority. Despite the improvement in security and some progress towards national unity, national governance and HLP issues remain overlooked.

# Scenario 4

## Gradually improving security; increased voluntary movements from sites; increased access

**IMPACT**

Improvement — Deterioration

**PROBABILITY**

Negligible — Low — Medium — High — Very high
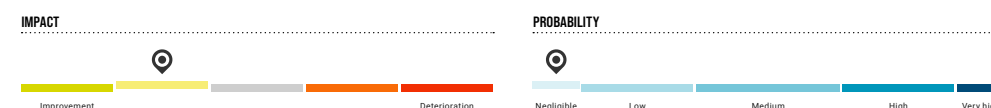
UNMISS successfully refocus their mission while continuing to support the state security forces and CWGs in their security operations in and around the displacement sites. Some limited progress is made on the national peace process and on HLP issues although the latter remain a major barrier to safe returns. Locally, governance gradually improves, and the lack of major security incidents results in a perception that security is improving. As a result, site residents spend increasing time outside the sites and some begin to integrate into host communities, especially where they can still access key services such as healthcare. While humanitarian access remains possible, some humanitarians reduce their activities at some sites, scaling up activities in other locations and incentivising IDPs to leave the sites.

# INTRODUCTION

## Problem statement

South Sudan fell into civil war in 2013, only two years after independence. Despite the signing of a revitalised peace agreement in 2018 and formation of a Transitional Government in 2020 aimed at fostering national unity, deep divisions remain and the progress towards a lasting peace is slow.  Nevertheless the situation remains more stable and in 2020 the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), started to redesignate the PoCs located within its forces' bases – home to around 168,000 of the 1.6 million IDPs in the country – as conventional IDP sites under the jurisdiction of the GoSS.

Taking into account a range of variables that may affect South Sudanese' decisions to remain in or leave the PoCs, these scenarios consider how the redesignation of PoCs might affect movement and settlement patterns in and around the sites during 2021, and the potential humanitarian consequences.

# PURPOSE OF THE SCENARIOS

These scenarios are not attempts to predict the future. Rather, they describe situations that could occur in the coming six months and are designed to highlight the possible impacts and humanitarian consequences associated with each scenario. The aim is to support strategic planning, create awareness, and promote preparedness activities for policymakers and other actors working in South Sudan. The time frame is from January to June 2021 although the scenarios may remain valid some months longer. See the Methodology section for more information on how these scenarios were developed.

## Limitations

Scenarios can seem to oversimplify an issue as the analysis balances details against broader assumptions. Scenario-building is not an end in itself; it is a process for generating new ideas that should, in turn, lead to changes in project design or decision-making. These scenarios focus primarily on the potential movement of people within, to, and from current and former PoC sites and the impact and humanitarian consequences for those moving.

## DISPLACEMENT AND HOTSPOTS
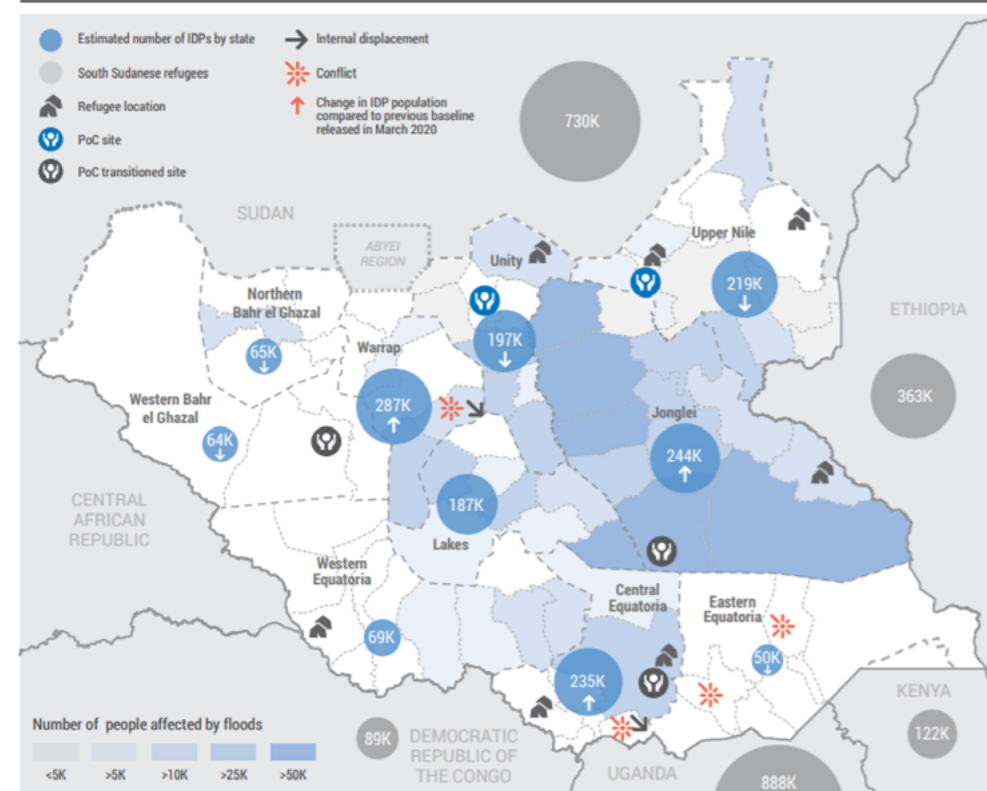


Source: OCHA 08/12/2020

# HOW TO USE THIS REPORT

The four scenarios are summarised on page 2. Pages 7–14 provide more detail on the scenarios, including potential humanitarian consequences. Page 15 lists five factors that could compound the humanitarian consequences of any of the scenarios. Annexed is a summary of the trigger events that could lead towards the situations described in the scenarios.

# CURRENT SITUATION

## Civil war and the peace process

South Sudan became the world's newest country in 2011 but fell into civil war at the end of 2013. Since the signing of the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) in September 2018 and the formation of the Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU) in February 2020, the peace agreement has registered moderate progress, with government roles at national, subnational and local levels being filled, albeit slowly (The New Humanitarian 26/05/2020). Limited and uneven participation of former conflict parties in temporary military training sites to unify police and military forces nationally raises security concerns. One of the key causes for lacking participation is the inadequate provision of essential services in cantonment sites including food, water, and medicines. Resumption of constitutional making activities keeps being postponed due to COVID-19 (ACAPS discussions with operational partners 11/2020). The government has launched nationwide disarmament campaign in July 2020 to help reduce intercommunal conflict and armed cattle raiding (Global R2P 15/11/2020). The campaign has had very limited results and registered at least one major security incident as clashes between armed civilians and security forces erupted during local disarmament exercises (OHCHR 14/08/2020, The Defense Post 12/08/2020).

## Displacement and PoCs

Conflict and natural disasters have resulted in an estimated 1.6 million IDPs. Around 172,000 of them or 11% live in the six current and former PoCs (IOM 03/2020, CCCM Cluster 05/10/2020; CCCM Cluster 07/12/2020, IOM DTM 01/12/2020, IOM DTM 2020). Globally, just below 30% of IDPs live in camps and camp-like settings while the majority settle within host communities (IOM 30/10/2020). They might settle in the proximity of the PoCs, churches, schools, abandoned factories and other so-called collective sites [2], or move into spontaneous settlements and villages further from the frontlines. But they also flee to the bush and swamplands (IDMC, OCHA 20/11/2019). Almost 2.2 million South Sudanese refugees live in Uganda, Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, and DRC (UNHCR 31/10/2020). At the start of the civil war in 2013 thousands sought temporary refuge in and just outside six bases of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) in the urban centres of Malakal, Wau, Bor, Bentiu and Juba where they have lived since (UNMISS 22/06/2020, NRC 31/05/2017, ODIHPN 09/2014).

POCs are not comparable to other types of IDP settlements. Legally, they are considered "inviolable and subject to the exclusive control and authority of the UN" and the role of UNMISS is justified under its mandate of protection of civilians, particularly from an imminent threat of harm (UNSC 12/09/2019). While each PoC has different dynamics and challenges, some features are common to multiple PoCs. Many IDPs leave the sites during the day to sustain their livelihoods, returning to the perceived safety of the PoC at night. Security is seen as a key reason for IDPs to remain in the sites (CSRF 02/10/2020, NRC 31/05/2017), and the provision of humanitarian assistance (food, shelter, water, sanitation, schools, hospitals and communal facilities) is also a draw (UNMISS 17/11/2020, UNSC 12/09/2019). Depending on the area of origin, IDPs in PoC sites have been reluctant to return due to floods, intercommunal violence both in urban and rural areas, the impossibility of gaining back their original homes, now occupied by other households or fully or partially destroyed by conflict or natural disasters, as well as other issues related to housing, land and property (HLP) (The New Humanitarian 01/06/2020). Authorities have so far proven unable to deal with the complex HLP caseload, which includes issues of reconciliation, transformative justice, restitution, and compensation (ACAPS discussions with operational partners 11/2020).

Even though people perceive PoCs as safer, especially at night, these sites are still affected by several security and protection issues also encountered by other South Sudanese -both non-IDPs and IDPs- outside the PoCs. These include intercommunal violence, criminality and lack of rule of law, threats from criminal gangs, revenge killings, armed groups attacks and ambushes, sexual and gender-based violence, and domestic violence (Stimson 13/10/2020, UNSCR 12/09/2019). Military presence and arbitrary arrests, especially of young people, are other factors of concern for IDPs leaving the sites in the short and long-term (UNSC 12/09/2019). Even though they have acted as a shelter and 'safe place' for thousands of IDPs, since their creation, PoC sites have come under attack before. Attackers destroyed shelters and caused casualties in Juba, Bor, Bentiu and Malakal as recently as 2016 (SIPRI, IOM 2016).

Congestion, overcrowding and the lack of adequate infrastructure expose PoC residents to higher risk of fires and disease outbreaks, particularly as WASH systems are very poor (MSF 20/06/2019). Food and livelihood needs are also paramount, particularly for IDPs facing mobility constraints due to protection concerns. In South Sudan patterns of "split return" are common with men and boys leaving the sites first to scope return, livelihoods, and rebuilding opportunities, while potentially more vulnerable individuals (women, children, and the elderly) remain at the site and have to protect themselves and their relatives from violence and criminality without support from family members.

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[2] Collective sites are generally non-functional buildings

## Redesignation of PoC sites

In the second half of 2020 UNMISS redesignated the Juba, Bor and Wau PoC sites to conventional IDP camps under the jurisdiction of the GoSS (UNMISS 17/11/2020). The process of transfer from UNMISS to the GoSS is ongoing with redesignation being planned for Malakal and Bentiu sites, even though an exact date has not been made public (UNSC 09/12/2020, UNMISS 16/12/2020). UNMISS has withdrawn troops from static duties (i.e. as permanent guards at PoCs) and is handing over security responsibilities to the national police and army, while the GoSS Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) gradually takes over administration.[3] The Mission continues to patrol site perimeters and maintains quick reaction forces (QRF) (UNMISS 17/11/2020). Humanitarians and researchers have concerns regarding the modalities and timing of withdrawal, highlighting the Bentiu and Malakal sites as particularly sensitive (CSRF 12/10/2020, ACAPS discussions with operational partners 11/2020). Specifically:

• Lack of communication regarding the details and practicalities of disengagement for PoCs.
• Potential lack of governmental capacities in taking on safety and security responsibilities and enforcement of rule of law.
• Land ownership issues related to the sites used as PoCs once UNMISS withdraws, with new tensions potentially emerging.
• Some residents of PoCs have scarce trust or even fear national security forces.

| SITE | STATUS (12/2020) | POPULATION HEADCOUNT (09/2020) |
|------|------------------|-------------------------------|
| Malakal | PoC site | 33,137 |
| Bentiu | PoC site | 97,321[4] |
| Juba 1 | redesignated as IDP camp | 6,915 |
| Juba 3 | redesignated as IDP camp | 22,778 |
| Bor | redesignated as IDP camp | 1,925 |
| Wau | redesignated as IDP camp | 9,393 |

Source: CCCM Cluster 05/10/2020; CCCM Cluster 07/12/2020, IOM DTM 01/12/2020, IOM DTM 2020

[3] "The RRC is the legal body mandated for organising humanitarian work and related matters throughout South Sudan." (RRC)

[4] As at October 2020

## Specific PoCs

### Juba (site 1 and 3)

The South Sudan National Police (SSNP) have agreed a standard operating procedure (SOP) to take over security duties, including coordination with humanitarian actors. UNMISS announced official redesignation of both sites on 17 November. A meeting between the governor of Central Equatoria state and the residents of the two sites was pending at the time of writing.

### Bentiu

A workplan for the transition of the site to IDP camp has been shared with humanitarians, but a transition date has not been made public yet. Inter-clan and group differences have led to tensions within the site, with residents concerned about safety due a reported increase in criminality.

### Bor

Redesignation was completed in September 2020, with CWGs taking a more active role, including supervising the pedestrian gate. Administrative takeover by the RRC is slowed by the absence of members of the government of Jonglei state who should act as focal points. They are still in Juba as the Jonglei government remains to be fully seated.

### Wau

Redesignation of the site is officially completed, though discussions on security/joint patrolling involving UNMISS and the SSNP and the bureaucratic process of handover of responsibilities to the RRC were ongoing in December. Some residents have fears about authorities taking over camp management.

### Malakal

A joint taskforce is guiding the redesignation and is chaired by UNMISS. Historically land and territory have been disputed along ethnic lines. Control over the city changed multiple times throughout the conflict, leaving it in ruins. Much of the population remains in the PoC site, with suspicion and tensions dividing different ethnic groups (Nuer, Shilluk and Dinka) and occurrences of violence. Former Shilluk residents of the PoC have been attacked as they tried to resettle outside it. The controversial nomination of General Johnson Olony for governor of Upper Nile state triggered a protracted and still unsolved debate within the unity government (The New Humanitarian 01/06/2020, Radio Tamazuj 24/11/2020).
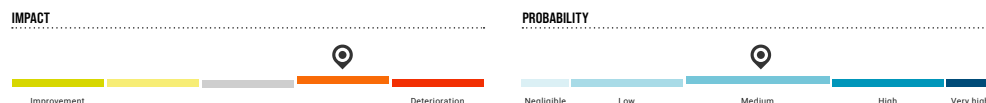
## Humanitarian access to IDPs

Government obstruction, impeding access of peace monitors and UNMISS staff to conflict zones, where IDP movement is substantial, has been reported (UNSC 25/11/2020). Humanitarians attempting to reach people displaced as a result of recent floods, especially in areas already affected by insecurity and/or hard-to-reach, have encountered seasonal challenges such as impassable roads and unusable airstrips (OCHA 09/12/2020). Lacking road and river transport infrastructure, an insufficient number of hubs and storage facilities for humanitarians in remote and/or rural areas, as well as wider insecurity (OCHA 01/10/2020) also affect the accessibility of IDP settlements. Former and current PoCs, located in proximity of UNMISS bases and towns/cities, with an established humanitarian presence have different access challenges: UNMISS has imposed limits to humanitarian interventions in PoC sites (NRC 31/05/2017) and further restrictions might be implemented by the GoSS now that the sites shift administration.

## COVID-19

While South Sudan has officially registered only 3,200 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 62 deaths, it is difficult to identify the full scale of the outbreak due to low testing capacities and fear of stigmatisation (Johns Hopkins University accessed 16/12/2020, WHO 13/10/2020). Government measures include an ongoing curfew between 10 pm and 6 am, limitations to interstate travel and required COVID-19 tests and quarantine for incoming travellers (UK Government 12/2020). Delays in the provision of visas for international staff and harassment and attacks during distributions of COVID-19-related aid are still hindering humanitarian access (OCHA 19/10/2020). Monitoring and controlling the outbreak in IDP locations is particularly challenging. IDPs might live in overcrowded settings where social distancing and contract tracing become difficult (WHO 13/10/2020); in makeshift settlements and remote areas, where IDPs might have found refuge from violence, services and aid, including health and WASH, might not be accessible (OCHA 01/10/2020). COVID-19 restrictions, especially in the initial phase of the outbreak had severe repercussions on the livelihoods of South Sudanese, including those living in the former PoCs of Wau and Juba, where movements was temporarily restricted, also impacting humanitarian access (OCHA 01/10/2020).

# 1 Delayed, gradual decrease in security; increased displacement; decreasing access

**IMPACT**

Improvement                Deterioration

**PROBABILITY**

Negligible    Low    Medium    High    Very high

Despite re-focusing their activity, UNMISS actively supports the CWGs, SSNP, and military for a few months enabling the maintenance of the current level of security in and around the camps. Coupled with slightly increased humanitarian access and services, this boosts the confidence of the local population in UNMISS and local security forces and community tensions begin to reduce. This drives a small but significant improvement in the local economic situation. Residents benefit from free movement throughout the area and from free access to available humanitarian and non-humanitarian services in and around the sites in late 2020 and early 2021. These improved circumstances encourage most site residents to stay and others to settle in or close to the sites.

However, as populations in and around the sites grow, increased competition over services, resources, jobs, and access to humanitarian assistance, and resulting rise in petty crime reignites intercommunal tensions. Security in and around the PoC sites begins to deteriorate and, while the UNMISS QRF prevents any major incidents occurring, their focus is elsewhere. Without UNMISS back up, the SSNP and the South Sudanese military lack capacity to restore security and as UNMISS training and support of CWGs ceases, the groups become less and less accountable in their protection duties. Existing local youth gangs gain strength and fuel crime and violence, some 'anti-authority' factions enforce recruitment in the community. Some within the security forces, which are not fully unified, participate in discriminatory and unethical practices, including targeting humanitarians, while quashing dissent in and around the PoC sites. Discriminatory practices in the judicial system and in CWGs are also reported. PoCs/recently redesignated IDP site residents' mistrust towards national security forces, CWGs, and UNMISS increases rapidly.

## Possible triggers/indicators

### Governance

- Local authorities are unable to effectively address security and HLP challenges in and around PoC sites and areas of origin/return

### Safety and security

- No progress is seen in the implementation of the peace agreements including towards improved security arrangements (i.e. unified police forces etc.)
- Government forces fail to provide adequate security due to capacity issues.
- UNMISS training and support of CWGs ceases
- UNMISS capacity engaged in areas other than PoCs
- Youth gangs are strengthened and become more proactive in asserting their power
- Forced recruitment in and around POC sites into 'anti-authority' factions
- Political interest at state level is against the POC site/IDP camps.

### Humanitarian access

- Attacks on humanitarian actors providing services to residents in and around the POC sites.

## Geographic areas most relevant to the scenario

Malakal, Bentiu, Bor, Juba IDP sites.

## Impact

Heightened insecurity and lack of cooperation from state authorities, uninterested in maintaining the PoC sites, restrict humanitarian access in and around the sites. Access to services and programmes in the areas is reduced or discontinued across sectors.

Many men and boys leave the sites to scope return, livelihoods, and rebuilding opportunities. Those left behind, who tend to be more vulnerable, face increased violence as law and order breaks down. Some residents flee the sites and their surroundings, losing shelter, income, and access to assistance. Where new makeshift displacement sites are set up, humanitarian resources are further stretched to meet emerging needs. Tensions over HLP rights between host communities and IDPs are triggered when the displaced settle in areas without security of tenure.

## Humanitarian consequences

**Protection:** reports of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) increase; all residents in and around the former PoC sites are exposed to a higher risk of physical harm. Physical and psychological trauma increases. Long-standing HLP issues remain, while new displacement leads to new disputes. Ongoing lack of access to justice perpetuates HLP issues and relative impunity of perpetrators.

**Food security and livelihoods:** conflict, competition with host communities, and displacement reduces livelihood opportunities and food security: some counties enter higher IPC phases (IPC 4 or higher).

**Health:** health service provision reduces as humanitarian operations reduce while access to available health services decreases for those displaced and with reduced income. In remote, makeshift, and collective displacement sites poor sanitation results in increased disease.

**Shelter**: many newly displaced lack adequate shelter. The tukul building process, which traditionally takes place in the next six months, is hampered by insecurity in some areas.
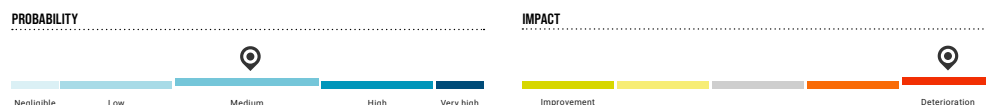
**WASH:** some IDPs leaving the former PoC sites go into further secondary or tertiary displacement while some others return to areas of origin that get flooded later in the rainy season where access to sanitation services and clean water becomes challenging. Secondarily displaced IDPs and returnees in Bor (Jonglei State) and Bentiu (Unity State) are likely to be the most affected.

## Humanitarian operational environment

After an initial scale-up of activities, operations in the vicinity of the sites are hampered by insecurity. Repositioning response activities is challenged as IDPs disperse to many locations, some insecure. Roadblocks, police harassment, and flooding (May onwards) further hinder free movement. National staff living in the sites run a higher risk of being targeted.

# 2. Rapid decrease in security; new displacement; decreased access.

**PROBABILITY**

Negligible — Low — Medium — High — Very high

**IMPACT**

Improvement — Deterioration

Confidence in local governance officials reduces as state and county officials promote divisive policies. This fuels a rise in intercommunal tension, gang activities, and generalised violence. Criminality rises within the sites which steadily fracture into ghettos. Attacks by organised youth groups lead to partial destruction in some of the sites. Lacking ongoing support from UNMISS, the CWGs become partisan and the local security forces lack the unity and capacity to quell the criminal activity. UNMISS does not intervene effectively. As violence increases humanitarian access to former and current PoCs becomes severely restricted, reducing the available services and protection the sites afford. Consequently, some IDPs are compelled to leave the PoC sites for the bush, Sudan, or other locations of temporary and mostly secondary displacement. Very few people are able to return to their place of origin both due to insecurity and to HLP related issues, which remain unsolved. Overall, the needs of the populations (IDPs and host communities) are aggravated by increased insecurity and poor governance. People able to leave the camps and those who cannot are faced with reduced access to many basic services, while their protection risks increase. There is a significant increase in food insecurity as farming, planting, and harvesting are affected by insecurity and limited access. Access to markets and cash assistance becomes increasingly limited leading to displacements, food insecurity (possible 'famine'-like conditions), and malnutrition. This goes beyond the former and current PoC sites. Some agencies switch operations from the camps to other areas, some reduce the scale of operations.

## Possible triggers/indicators

### Governance
- Local governors adopt divisive policies which further inflame intercommunal tensions
- Positions at county and commissioner levels go to unpopular individuals, with commissioners assigned to communities where they are not accepted.
- HLP issues remain unresolved HLP decisions fuel discontent
- Appointment of an unpopular governor of Upper Nile

- Provision of essential services reduces further

### Safety and security
- Recruitment to, and mobilisation of, armed and non-armed groups increases
- Further breakdown within the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition (SPLM-IO)
- Youth groups mobilised along party lines and coming from neighbouring towns
- UN forces do not deter or contain the escalation of violence in the sites

### Humanitarian access
- Humanitarian access is reduced by the state authorities
- Humanitarian funding from key donors decreases

## Geographic areas most relevant to the scenario

Juba, Bor, Malakal and wider Upper Nile.

## Impact

As security decreases, the displacement sites become far less safe both at day and night, causing increasing numbers of people to leave and seek safety elsewhere. Meanwhile those remaining face increased violence and abuse, including targeted assassinations of political and community figures. Young men are caught up in gangs which grow increasingly aggressive as access to goods and services decrease. Humanitarian access to the displacement sites is lost as national personnel begin to be targeted. Limited access both to camps and to those leaving (due to both insecurity and physical/logistical constraints), severely hampers needs assessment and reduces protection further. The independence of humanitarians is threatened as the GoSS uses access as bargaining chip when dealing with aid organisations. The upsurge of violence in the Malakal site disrupts the functioning of the nearby airport, and thus humanitarian logistic chains. Overall increasing insecurity results in further (secondary) displacement, as very few people are able to return to their place of origin both due to insecurity and to HLP related issues, which remain unsolved.

Despite increased pressure to act inside and outside former and current PoC sites to guarantee protection UNMISS does not intervene effectively fuelling mistrust and resentment of the population against the mission. Trust towards UNMISS is lost also among humanitarian actors.

## Humanitarian consequences

Overall, there will not be an additional number of people in need but the needs of the populations (IDPs and host communities) will be aggravated by the situation.

**Food security:** Significant increase in food insecurity: farming, planting, and harvesting are affected by insecurity and limited access. Access to markets and cash assistance are increasingly limited leading to displacements, food insecurity (possible 'famine'-like conditions), and malnutrition. This goes beyond the POC and IDP sites.

**Protection:** All protection issues that already exist are exacerbated as people adopt more negative coping mechanisms (such as child labour, exploitation), turn to crime or join gangs. Cattle raiding increases. Violence against women and girls and forced recruitment, including of children, increases. Access to services or assistance for survivors of violence ceases. Ongoing lack of access to justice and impunity for perpetrators.
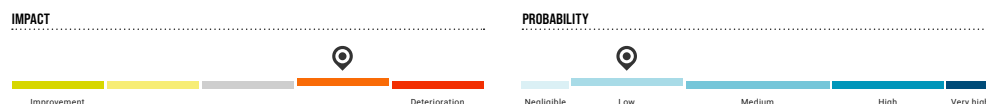
**HLP and access to services:** People leave the PoC sites in search of access to services. They might settle in other areas. Tensions with host communities and stress on limited services follow. Issues around HLP escalate as more IDPs leave the sites but are unable to go back to their area of origin.

## Humanitarian operational environment

As humanitarian service delivery reduces, resentment increases leading to targeted attacks, mistrust towards humanitarians, and reducing the ability to work effectively with communities. Decreased funding might also affect sectorial response. As the environment becomes less secure and the affected population more widespread, air transportation becomes the general modus operandi, increasing operational costs.

# 3. Improved security, increased involuntary movement from sites, reduced access

**IMPACT**

| Improvement | | | | Deterioration |
|---|---|---|---|---|

**PROBABILITY**

| Negligible | Low | Medium | High | Very high |
|---|---|---|---|---|

Local governance strengthens as all governors are appointed, including in Upper Nile state, and most of them are well perceived and accepted by the local communities. Despite the refocus of UNMISS forces and police, UNMISS continues indirectly to contribute to the maintenance of safety and security in and around current and former PoC sites through the effective use of the Quick Reaction Forces (QRF) and ongoing support to the Community Watch Groups (CWG). This leads to a marked improvement in local security.

Meanwhile local authorities seek to encourage movement out of former and current PoCs with the objective of closing the sites. They do this by limiting the provision of humanitarian assistance within the sites, through increased bureaucracy and tightened security. As humanitarian services in the sites reduces and restrictions increase, many IDPs leave, both voluntarily and forcibly, to seek new livelihood opportunities and better access to services, settling in the relatively secure local environment. Not many return to their place of origin due a lack of progress on HLP issues and limited public services in areas of return. Tensions with host communities rise in many places of relocation especially where resources are scarce and because of HLP issues. Seeking to maintain the improved security situation, national and local security measures become increasingly restrictive reducing freedom of movement and humanitarian access.

## Possible triggers/indicators

### Governance

- Appointment of an acceptable governor for Upper Nile state.
- Governors appointed are well perceived and respected by local population
- Steps of the peace agreement are implemented following the principle of unity of the country
- Governance becomes increasingly authoritarian

- Local authorities represent their constituency without supporting one or more ethnic groups over others
- Ethiopia, as well as other IGAD countries, fail to actively encourage implementation of the peace agreements

### Safety and security

- Security incidents in the sites decrease
- Increased funding to the military
- Use of the military to police the sites
- Effective use by UNMISS of CWG and QRF

### Humanitarian access

- Local governance controls on humanitarian agencies increase i.e., restrictive measures; bureaucratic requirements and physical considerations (like blocking access, possible harassment from the SSNP etc.)
- HLP issues remain unresolved
- Humanitarian funding from major donors decreases
- Increased bureaucratic impediments and checkpoints placed by local authorities

## Geographic areas most relevant to the scenario

Malakal and Juba, where governors may be less connected with the displaced population and thus less careful in monitoring their situation and needs to ask for support/response.

## Impact

As security enforcement becomes more authoritarian, police, military and CWGs become more brutal and abuse increases. As few perpetrators of this abuse are held to account, and access to justice seems remote, local people become increasingly frustrated. Faith in the local authorities drops but opportunities to protest reduce. Where the governance is more authoritarian, communities' rights and freedoms are not always guaranteed. As local authorities assume greater control over humanitarian organisations, some refocus on facilitating return or relocation movement, or providing assistance in new areas of displacement whenever freedom of movement allows. Many organisations shift focus away from camps to (often harder to reach) areas of relocation and return where programming also involving host communities and focusing on integration and conflict sensitivity becomes key.

## Humanitarian consequences

**Protection:** while threats to personal safety reduce, protection needs remain, especially for the most vulnerable and those not able to adapt to the changing circumstances.  The policy of closing former and current PoCs forces some into unsafe living conditions. Opportunities for communities to access justice and engage customary courts increase although access to justice remains discriminatory. In areas of return unresolved HLP issues leave some marginalised.

**Food security and livelihoods:** livelihood opportunities increase as improved security enables better access to and fairer distribution of resources in some areas although HLP issues still prevent many returnees accessing sufficient land.

**Health, WASH, Education:** pressure on the limited available services in new areas of displacement increases.
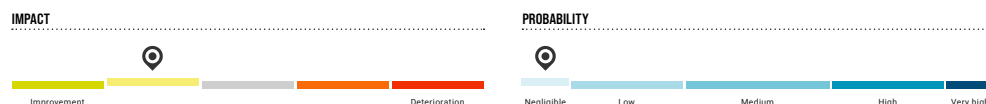
*Shelter:* some of those IDPs who manage to leave former and current PoC sites face new displacement when host communities are hostile to their resettlement and HLP issues remain unsolved; they seek refuge in the bush, with host families, or set up new makeshift camps. Assistance is needed to guarantee adequate shelters and avoid overcrowding.

## Humanitarian operational environment

Bureaucratic hurdles and costs increase and the movement of staff to and within the country becomes harder. There is increased need for negotiations (e.g., through NGO forum, donors). Costs increase for those continuing to provide assistance around the displacement sites due to increased bureaucracy and interference. Attempts to divert or control aid delivery increase. Funding shifts from response in displacement sites to long-term recovery, based on a benchmark which meets safe, voluntary, informed, and dignified returns. Response in and around displacement sites becomes limited.

# 4. Gradually improving security; increased voluntary movements from sites; increased access

**IMPACT**

Improvement — Deterioration

**PROBABILITY**

Negligible | Low | Medium | High | Very high

The peace process keeps moving forward with some slow progress registered and an increased focus on peace building and reconciliation from the government. Local governance gradually improves as new governors are well received by both host and IDP communities. Intercommunal tensions ease slightly. While the security situation remains volatile, the number of major incidents reduce as the UNMISS QRF is effective in supporting the local security apparatus and implement a slow, cautious disengagement from the PoCs. Some key appointments at county level and in local governance institutions, along with more funding, lead to increased service provision by local authorities although understaffing remains a constraint to full-service delivery and governance remains fragile.

As UNMISS implement the re-focusing of their mission, more effort goes into the training of CWGs, local security forces and in joint patrolling of the sites until local actors are ready to take over law enforcement. Some progress in the unification and professionalisation of the national army and countrywide disarmament contributes to an improved security outlook, with joint trained forces starting patrolling and operations. Some localised progress on HLP issues is achieved, but unresolved disputes remain a source of tensions in several areas and a barrier to returns.

## Possible triggers/indicators

### Governance
- Progress is seen in the implementation of the peace agreements
- Some progress on resolving HLP issues is made
- Increased finance available for local governance
- Improved provision of essential services
- Appointment of an acceptable governor for Upper Nile state.

### Safety & Security
- UNMISS continue to support the CWGs
- UNMISS provide effective deterrent patrols and QRF back up to state security forces
- Progress on unification of security forces
- Capacity building of security actors is scaled up
- Broader security increases
- National authorities and security forces support the CWGs
- Local economy improves
- Disarmament process gains momentum

### Humanitarian access
- Government and communities continue accepting aid
- No decrease in humanitarian funding
- Community leaders continue to accept humanitarian services.

## Geographic areas most relevant to the scenario

Wau, Juba, Bor and Malakal and wider Upper Nile.

## Impact

Violence and crime, including reported attacks on women, reduce in and around former PoC sites due to more effective law enforcement and disarmament effort by national security actors with training and support from UNMISS. However, some households and individuals badly affected by the economic crisis, exacerbated by COVID-19 restrictions, still resort to illegal activities as a negative coping strategy, despite improved law enforcement. IDPs feel more secure and their protests decrease in size and frequency. Communities begin to trust national authorities and security forces who are more present at all administrative levels and start performing better.

Movement in and around former PoC sites increases significantly as security increases. Some voluntary return movements start, mostly in areas where HLP issues are resolved. Pending HLP issues and disputes continue to prevent citizens from returning to other areas, but generally do not lead to tensions, as safety and security are maintained and people continue to access services. The increased stability and security causes households to spend more time outside former PoC sites, including searching for livelihoods opportunities. Some households start integrating into host communities, especially where they can access services.

Humanitarians reduce their activities at some sites, scaling up projects in other locations thus incentivising IDPs to leave the sites. Dependency on aid continues with agencies shifting their programming to tend to the needs of the population not only at former PoC sites, but also in areas of return and of settlement outside the sites.

## Humanitarian consequences

While prospects for those finding new sources of livelihoods improve, returnees and resettled IDPs face new difficulties in accessing health, WASH, and education services, particularly in rural areas.

**Protection:** improvements in the security situation and in intercommunal relations introduce new needs such as conflict resolution and sensitivity programming and initiatives to build social cohesion as different ethnic communities come in closer contact.  Unresolved HLP issues and disputes, particularly in highly volatile areas such as Malakal, remain a source of tensions. While households scope feasible return areas and assess their safety, lack of comprehensive information, deep rooted hostilities between clans and communities, harassment by security forces, and/or limited livelihoods opportunities (including agricultural production) lead to attacks and secondary displacement for some of the returnees or newly resettled IDPs.

**Food security and livelihoods:** as people move out of the sites searching for new livelihood opportunities the support they need is less emergency-based (e.g. voucher ration distributions) and more oriented towards community resilience. Still, returnee households and re-settling IDPs face difficulties in securing food at the onset of the lean season in spring and reduced access to agricultural production opportunities.

**Health:** some returnees and IDPs might go back or resettle in areas where health services are not as readily available or as close as in the PoC sites. This is especially true for rural or more remote areas.

**WASH:** some returnees and IDPs might go back or move to rural areas or districts later affected by flooding where sanitary and WASH services are minimal to absent. They experience higher WASH needs than in the PoC sites.

**Education:** if moving to rural and remote areas or areas recently affected by floods, schools might be less readily available for IDP and returnee children.

## Humanitarian operational environment

Local authorities guarantee access to aid deliveries. Humanitarians are still able to provide services inside and outside the sites after redesignation as funding levels remain stable and the security environment is conducive, but they continue to have access challenges, for example in volatile, hard-to-reach and/or flood prone areas, such as Bor and Malakal, particularly at the start of the rainy season in May. Difficulties in accessing aid for people in need emerge as some agencies' resources are stretched thin trying to cover an expanded geographical area to assist IDPs, returnees and host communities. Services provided in former PoC sites are reduced.

## COMPOUNDING FACTORS

The following developments can occur in parallel to any of the **above scenarios and have the potential to significantly change the humanitarian situation.**

### Flooding

The wet season starts in April/May. Should it begin earlier or if rains are unusually heavy this would have both positive and negative impact. While the rains usually decrease violence as armed groups move less, heavy rains and flooding damage shelter, crops, roads, and contribute to the spread of water or vector-borne diseases, including malaria. Due to the recent floods, many pastoralists lost some cattle and so part of their livelihoods. Flooding will most probably affect access around Bor site.

### Shifts in opposition forces (SPLM-IO) and within armed factions not signatory to the revitalised agreement

Continued defections from the SPLM-IO might lead an increasing number of fighters into the ranks of armed groups not signatory to the peace agreement, strengthening them and potentially increasing the intensity of clashes with governmental forces. This would further reduce UNMISS attention to the situations at the PoC sites, with QRFs deployed elsewhere to contain clashes based on the general protection mandate of the mission.

### National peace process

South Sudan is currently in the transition period of the peace process. However, the signatories to the peace agreement lack the will to implement all points of the agreement and are dependent on the facilitation and pressure of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) countries to make progress. Many IGAD countries, such as Ethiopia and Uganda, are however focused on resolving internal issues and might offer only limited facilitation and support to the implementation of the peace agreement in the near future.

Furthermore, discussions about going back to 32 states continue. Implementation, or even serious consideration, of this will likely hamper the whole implementation of the peace agreement (based on the 10-state solution for what concerns resources and power sharing).

### COVID-19

While there are no reliable figures to determine the current spread of the virus within South Sudan, nor its direct impact on the population, there are significant indirect effects. Con-

tainment measures, such as stricter border control policies, reduce the ease of moving humanitarian staff to and from the country. Self-imposed measures also increase programme costs or add delays: a significant increase in COVID-19 cases in or around the sites would compound access issues.

### Humanitarian funding

The pandemic's effect on donor countries will almost certainly result in reduced global humanitarian funding for 2021. Thus, many programmes in South Sudan can expect funding challenges whatever scenario materialises.

## HOW SCENARIOS CAN BE USED

Scenarios are a set of different ways that a situation may develop. The aim of scenario building is not to try and accurately predict the future, but rather to understand the range of possible futures and then select a few that result in distinct situations, often with differing humanitarian outcomes, that can:

- Support strategic planning for agencies and NGOs
- Identify assumptions underlying anticipated needs and related interventions
- Enhance the adaptability and design of detailed assessments
- Influence monitoring and surveillance systems
- Create awareness, provide early warning, and promote preparedness activities among stakeholders.

For more information on how to build scenarios, please see the ACAPS Technical Brief on Scenario Development.

## METHODOLOGY

These scenarios were developed in November 2020, during a series of online meetings and two workshops. Staff from 11 humanitarian and policy organisations contributed to these scenarios through participation in the workshops or bilateral meetings.

Many variables that could cause change were mapped during the workshop. By making assumptions as to how these variables might plausibly change, four scenarios were identified. These scenarios were then expanded and the major impact of each scenario and its humanitarian consequences identified.

The scenarios are provided with the intention of covering the range of plausible futures. Although they do not attempt to predict exactly what will happen, it is expected that the future will not lie too far from at least one of the scenarios presented.  A list of individual indicators/triggers is given on pages 17–18. It should be noted that a combination, but not necessarily all, of the triggers are required to reach any given scenario.

## THANK YOU

These scenarios were produced by ACAPS in partnership with DRC and NRC. ACAPS, DRC and NRC would like to thank all organisations that provided input to these scenarios: both those that attended the online workshops and those that contributed via bilateral meetings.

# SCENARIOS TRIGGERS

## Scenario 1:

Delayed, gradual decrease in security; increased displacement;
decreasing access

## Scenario 2:

Rapid decrease in security; new displacement; decreased access

## Scenario 3:

Improved security, increased involuntary movement from sites, reduced access

## Scenario 4:

Gradually improving security; increased voluntary movements from sites; increased access

*It should be noted that individual triggers are rarely sufficient to cause the unfolding of a scenario (or to affect humanitarian access). In practice, a combination of indicators is usually required. By monitoring the indicators below, it is possible to determine the direction the crisis is moving and which scenario or scenarios are increasingly likely.*

| SCENARIOS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | BACKGROUND INFORMATION |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **The scale of humanitarian needs is likely to increase if:** | | | | | |
| Local authorities are unable to effectively address security in and around PoC sites and areas of origin/return due to capacity issues, while UNMISS capacity is engaged in areas other than the PoCs | x | | | | Before the dry season starts and anticipating potential conflict over resources,  UNMISS has moved personnel to five new temporary bases in conflict hotspots (UNMISS 16/12/2020). |
| Local authorities are unable to effectively address HLP challenges in and around PoCs and areas of origin/return | x | x | x | | |
| UN forces do not deter or contain the escalation of violence in the sites | x | x | | | |
| Attacks on humanitarian actors providing services to residents in and around the POCs. | x | | | | 64 humanitarians have been involved in security incidents in South Sudan in 2020 as of the time of writing, including in Bentiu PoC site (Humanitarian Outcomes 2020). |
| UNMISS training and support of CWGs ceases | x | | | | |
| Strengthening of youth gangs | x | x | | | Gang violence was mentioned as a main threat inside the PoCs by residents in 2019, especially in Juba and Wau (UNSC 12/09/2020). |
| Political interest at state level is against the POC site/IDP camps | x | | | | |
| Recruitment to, and mobilisation of, armed and non-armed groups increases | x | x | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Government imposes more limits on humanitarian action | x | x | | |
| Ethiopia, as well as other IGAD countries, fail to actively encourage implementation of the peace agreements | | x | | Ethiopia is witnessing internal conflict in the Tigray region. All neighbouring countries are facing the health and socio-economic repercussions of the COVID-19 outbreak, which might leave less focus on foreign policy engagements. |
| Humanitarian funding from major donors decreases | x | x | | As at 17 December 2020, South Sudan had received 1.3 billion in aid compared to 1.4 billion in 2018 and in 2019 (FTS 2020) |
| Unpopular individuals, not accepted by communities, are appointed in key state positions (governors, commissioners, etc…) | x | | | While governors of other states have been already appointed, the nomination of a governor for Upper Nile state has generated disputes within the government, which are also hindering country commissioners' nominations (UN 15/12/2020). |
| Local governors adopt divisive policies which further inflame intercommunal tensions | x | | | |
| Provision of essential government services reduces further | x | | | |
| Further breakdown within the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition (SPLM-IO) | x | | | |
| **The scale of humanitarian needs is likely to decrease if:** | | | | |
| Governors appointed are well perceived and respected by local population, including for Upper Nile state | | x | x | |
| Steps of the peace agreement progress and follow the principle of unity of the country | | x | x | |
| Local authorities represent their constituency without supporting one or more ethnic groups over others | | x | | |
| Security incidents in the sites decrease thanks to effective use by UNMISS of QRF, a better-funded military by the GoSS and good cooperation between security forces | | x | x | |
| Broader security increases | | | x | |
| Some progress on resolving HLP issues is made | | | x | |
| Increased finance available for local governance and adequately spent on provision of essential services | | | x | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Progress on unification of security forces | | | | x | Joint patrolling by government and opposition forces has started in the Bentiu PoC site (UNMISS 16/12/2020). |
| Capacity building of security actors is scaled up, including CWGs | | | | x | |
| Local economy improves | | | | x | |
| Disarmament process gains momentum | | | | x | |
| **The scale of humanitarian needs is likely to remain similar if:** | | | | | |
| No progress is seen in the implementation of the peace agreements including towards improved security arrangements (i.e., unified police forces etc.) | x | | | | |
| UNMISS continue to support the CWGs and SSNP | | | | x | After the PoC redesignation, UNPOL officers have been co-located with South Sudanese counterparts in police posts in the proximity of former PoCs (UNMISS 16/12/2020). |
| No decrease in humanitarian funding | | | | x | |
| Government and communities continue accepting aid | | | | x | |