

## Urgent attention needed to tackle worrying humanitarian situation in GPAA, South Sudan

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Amidst the recent wave of violence in the Greater Pibor Administrative Area (GPAA) between rival communities, a worsening catastrophe is unfolding, putting women, children and the elderly on the brink of another humanitarian crisis.

Inter-communal conflict & violence that started before Christmas of 2022 and into most of January 2023 in Greater Pibor have left about 50,000 people displaced and in dire need of humanitarian assistance. The situation is worsening, noting that all those displaced have already had horrific two-years of floods coming back to back.

Recently, the Rapid Response Fund by the UN; was allocated to support immediate short-term gaps in the Pibor response, but NGOs are concerned that the conditions will continue to deteriorate as people require food and shelter. Despite the efforts by NGOs to provide critical basic needs, the population in Pibor lives in pessimism as the already dire situation may even worsen.

*“The humanitarian situation in Pibor is so bad that women and children sleep in the open with empty stomachs for days. Women and children face high risk of starvation without an increase in humanitarian assistance.”*

*-Oxfam Country Director in South Sudan-*

While the humanitarian response continues, we are also appalled by the risks agencies and their assets are exposed in the line of saving lives. Several armed attacks of breaking into NGO compounds in Pibor and Gumuruk leaving humanitarian workers requiring medical attention.

“Attacks on humanitarian workers and assets delay delivery of life-saving and life-changing assistance in response to people critically affected by violence and other shocks. So far, in 2023, three aid workers of South Sudanese origin have lost their lives in the line of duty.” Says Cissy Kagaba, NGO Forum Secretariat Director.

“Such actions discourage humanitarian workers from playing their role while also watering down any effort to build on past gains,” she says.

At these alarming trends, the NGO Forum calls on the international community and national counterparts to act immediately. The safety of humanitarian and a robust humanitarian response will mitigate the loss of lives. We urge the communities to respect the values that come with hosting displaced people. Securing humanitarian agencies’ assets and humanitarian workers is paramount in ensuring communities are better served and suffering is alleviated.

NGO Forum is also concerned with the looming escalation of violence in Upper Nile and calls on all parties involved to exercise restraint.