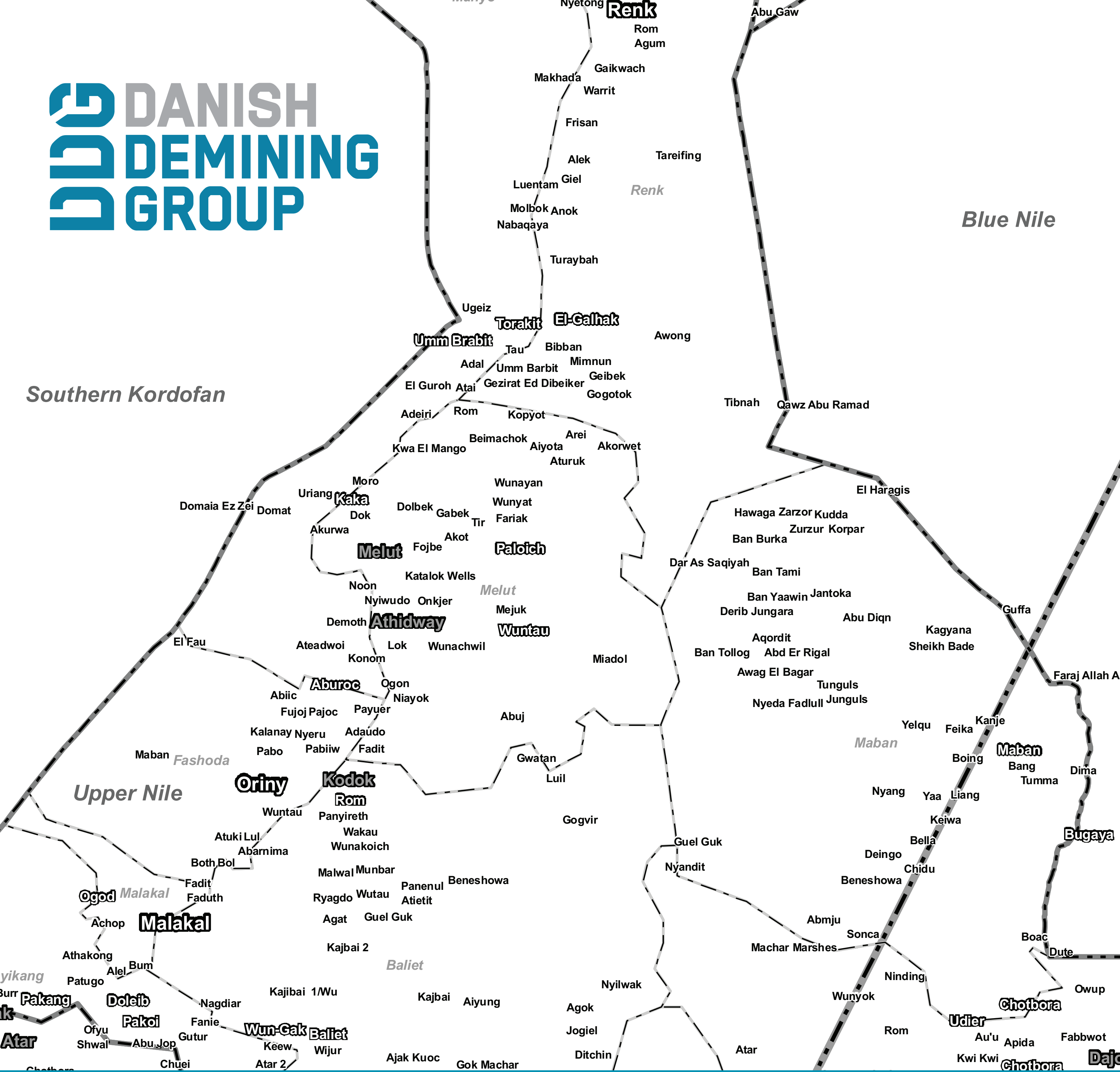

DISPLACEMENT, DISHARMONY AND DISILLUSION

UNDERSTANDING HOST-REFUGEE TENSIONS IN MABAN COUNTY, SOUTH SUDAN

ABOUT DANISH DEMINING GROUP

Danish Demining Group (DDG) is a Humanitarian Mine Action and Armed Violence Reduction Unit in the Danish Refugee Council (DRC). DRC is a non-profit organisation that works worldwide to help and protect refugees, internally displaced and other conflict-affected persons.

The DDG mission is to recreate a safe environment where people can live without the threat of landmines, unexploded ordnance and small arms and light weapons. We work to achieve this through Humanitarian Mine Action activities, focusing on landmines and explosive remnants of war, as well as Armed Violence Reduction programmes that address both physical and mental aspects of the threat that small arms and explosive remnants of war pose to the recreation of a safe environment as a starting point for development.

INTRODUCTION

When conflict erupted in Blue Nile State in September 2011, thousands of people began fleeing their homes. Indiscriminate bombing targeted a vulnerable civilian population and members of the southern-aligned political party, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N), were harassed, detained and, in some cases, killed. The influx of more than 30,000 people across the border into South Sudan created a humanitarian crisis and prompted a massive international emergency response. The crisis beset population of Blue Nile found relative stability and a local population willing to embrace them in Maban County, Upper Nile State. However, as time has passed, the refugee population has swelled to a staggering 110,000 people and perceived inequalities and competition for resources has started causing tensions between the host and refugee populations.

Based on desk research, consultations in Maban among refugee and host communities and months of working in the area, this paper brings together a historical, socio-economic and political perspective on the communities present in Maban. The paper also provides an outline of areas of tension and potential conflict mitigation responses.

Lauren Hutton

Armed Violence Reduction Advisor

Danish Demining Group, South Sudan

avradvisor@ddg-southsudan.org

1. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This thematic paper is founded on a recognised need to understand more explicitly the societies in which international interventions in Maban County are being conducted. Given the scale of the refugee influx and the concomitant environmental pressure, tensions between the host and refugee communities were relatively predictable. International actors tried from early in the crisis to ensure that primary and secondary benefits of the international attention had a visible, positive impact on the host community. However, low-intensity violence has still occurred.

While researching the interactions between host and refugee communities in Maban, it also became clear that the pressures of displacement were being experienced differently by different communities. Understanding these differences involved applying a longer-term historical perspective to look at self-reliance and coping mechanisms within communities. In general terms, 2011 was the first time the Ingassana have displaced in such large numbers. The impact of losing their fertile farm and grazing land has been devastating to people's livelihoods but their culture and socio-political structures have largely remained intact. For other communities such as the Uduk, for example, the 2011/2 displacement was yet another forced movement within a cycle of instability. When the Uduk displaced to Maban County, it was less than five years since their return from Ethiopia. As a largely agricultural population, the lack of livestock and recent displacement has meant that the Uduk were particularly vulnerable during this cycle of displacement.

On the side of the host community, it has become clear to partners operating in the area that despite international efforts to extend benefits to the Mabaan, there remains a widespread perception that hosting the refugee communities is coming at a high cost to local livelihoods. Because of its strategic location, the residents of Maban County suffered dreadfully during the second civil war. Caught between essential oil infrastructure and access to the Ethiopian border, Maban was a frontline in offensives between Sudan and southern Sudan as well as between inter-south rivalries when the SPLM/A suffered from ethnic divisions in the 1990s. The Mabaan have been particularly vulnerable to external forces well beyond their control, with the refugee influx perceived as being the latest source of external predation on their natural resources and erosion of livelihoods.

Lessons Learned

The findings in this report demonstrate the importance of understanding the history and culture of refugee populations. It is apparent that different refugee communities have very different capacities and vulnerabilities and these must be understood to develop appropriate responses to their needs. Additionally, through this study it has become apparent that the history and culture of the host community also needs to be understood. In the context of Maban, the host community has fewer resources on which to draw than some of the refugee populations. If this had been understood better at the beginning of the emergency phase, assistance to the host community may have

received a higher priority. Additionally, international actors could have increased the levels of communication with the host community to offset negative perceptions and point out the positive benefits of hosting the refugee camps.

The compounding livelihoods crises currently taking root is at the core of host-refugee tensions. Despite a consensus among humanitarian actors at the beginning of the emergency in Maban that the host community needed to receive assistance in parallel with the refugee community, this has not happened on a large enough scale. There has also not been enough focus on livelihoods support, especially at the onset of the crisis. Consequently, conflicts have emerged between the refugee and host community which could perhaps have been avoided and certainly could have been managed more effectively. As it is widely accepted that the refugee situation in Maban will become protracted, it is imperative that the livelihoods needs of the host and refugee communities are addressed.

A crucial part of the tensions currently occurring in Maban relates to the scale of the refugee influx and the overall population numbers in relation to the host community. Putting too many refugees in too small an area is one of the key lessons from Maban. Not only is the carrying capacity of the land insufficient for an influx of livestock but the overwhelming number of refugees compared to hosts fundamentally affects access to resources and vulnerabilities.

The overarching lesson learned from Maban in terms of host and refugee tensions is that there should have been a focus on the sharing of resources and inter-communal conflict resolution much earlier in the emergency. Many of the current initiatives aimed at dialogue and agreements on resource usage came as remedial action due to violence and tensions.

Recommendations

Strategic direction

- As part of any refugee or emergency response, international humanitarian actors should develop a clearer understanding of the communities with whom they are working as a primary project objective and activity. Understanding who beneficiaries are should be the foundation on which appropriate programmes are developed.
- The Refugee Law has been passed by the South Sudanese parliament and needs to be rolled out across the country. The humanitarian community operating in Maban can ensure that the relevant authorities are aware of the law and understand the rights that refugees can claim in South Sudan. Refugee rights training for host communities and local authorities should be balanced with highlighting refugee obligations to respect the laws of South Sudan and also the resources and culture of hosts.

- Ensure that there are clear agreements between the refugee and host community about access to and sharing of resources and that these are strictly implemented. The agreements should be reviewed at regular intervals to ensure that they remain relevant and continue to meet the needs of both communities. To date, agreements have been made, but they are not always followed.
- Increasingly refugee situations worldwide are becoming protracted. Humanitarian actors need to take this into account in South Sudan for their planning and programming to avoid creating a dependency culture among the refugees and to ensure that refugees are able to become as self-reliant as possible. Protracted refugee situations pose challenges for programming and also have the potential to create significant tensions between the host and refugee community. However, the extended period of time also gives humanitarian actors the opportunity to develop a good understanding of refugee and hosts needs and to develop longer-term programming that helps to promote development in both communities.

Targeted interventions

- Humanitarian actors should take into account the different capacities and vulnerabilities of the different refugee communities and design programmes accordingly to build on existing capacities and reduce vulnerabilities.
- Programmes need to address the needs of the host as well as the refugee community
- Joint refugee-host committees should be developed to explore the possibility with the humanitarian community for joint programming to target the development needs of both communities. Where appropriate, joint social activities could be arranged.

Mixing long-term programming

- Humanitarian actors face the challenge of working in an emergency context but, at the same time, needed to introduce long-term development programmes. With displacement continuing for more than a year now and set to continue, there is a need to plan for longer-term displacement within the emergency context. This requires programming to continue to meet the humanitarian needs while enabling integrated rural development and complimentary livelihoods. A more explicit focus on supporting effective livelihoods and advancing income generation is required.
- Longer-term planning is needed to ensure equitable access to natural resources and sustainable environmental management. For example, many trees have been cut down for firewood; a reforestation plan could be developed. Organisations have begun to introduce more fuel efficient stoves and should continue to explore programming options which reduce the impact of the refugee camps on the environment. Related to this is the need to include issues of natural resources and livelihoods from an early stage in the emergency planning not only to mitigate conflict at a later stage but also to promote self-reliance for refugees.

Communication and Conflict Mitigation

- The humanitarian community has made efforts to develop mechanisms for communication within and among the various communities in Maban. These have included the creation of committees to represent the different communities or particular groups within each community such as youth and women, and organizing meetings among the humanitarian actors and refugee and host communities. Despite these efforts, there is a need to strengthen and improve these mechanisms to ensure that:
    - Information is shared among the relevant groups in a timely manner
    - Representatives who are regarded as legitimate by those they represent participate actively in decision making and, at the very least, are consulted about decisions which will have a direct impact on their community
    - Refugee and host communities meet regularly to discuss any tensions and identify methods to mitigate against them
    - The relevant local authorities and security providers are involved in discussions and understand their roles and responsibilities within humanitarian law. Technical support should be provided by humanitarian actors when necessary.
    - Roles and responsibilities of the different committees need to be clear and meeting schedules coordinated to ensure that each committee has an appropriate amount of work
    - Committees can be used a vehicles to promote safety and security within the communities and as advocates for reducing vulnerabilities. For example, if those who are influential in conflict resolution mechanisms understand that it is never acceptable to harass, assault and/or rape women who are accessing natural resources, even when they are exceeding what has been agreed, they can have a role in disseminating this throughout their respective communities.

2. DISPLACEMENT: THE CONFLICT IN BLUE NILE

Historical Marginalisation

The backdrop for the humanitarian emergency in Maban is the crisis in Blue Nile which is part of a broader political, economic and security crisis engulfing Sudan. Stretching from Darfur in the west to Blue Nile in the east, the states along the southern border have been engaged in an active civil war which has remained unchanged by the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), the Darfur Peace Agreement or the independence of South Sudan. As Yasir Arman, secretary general of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) said in a telephone interview with the Enough Project, "It's not about Nuba Mountains. It's not about Darfur. It's not about Blue Nile. It's about democracy and transformation. The issue is about how Sudan is going to be ruled[1]." The current conflict in Blue Nile is just one more in a series of interlocking civil wars that have engulfed Sudan since 1956 all underpinned by the state's crisis of legitimacy and political and economic marginalisation.

In Blue Nile, the CPA signalled the potential end of a history of marginalisation and exploitative governance. The CPA provided for Popular Consultations as a means to negotiate the relationship between the citizens of Blue Nile and the central government in a post-CPA Sudan. The CPA also outlined interim governance arrangements including power sharing (45% SPLM and 55% National Congress Party -NCP), security sector reform and wealth sharing. These concessions were an attempt to address the grievances of Blue Nile populations towards Khartoum in particular on political exclusion and economic exploitation. Blue Nile has since 1956 been economically and strategically significant to Sudan through the hydroelectric dam at Roseires; the mineral rich areas around the Ingassana Hills and Qeissan where gold, chromite and manganite are mined; potential and producing oil fields in the north and east; large-scale mechanised farming areas developed from the 1970s; and forests that provide significant amounts of wood to the northern market.

The Second Civil War: Strategic Importance and Mass Displacement

During the second civil war, Blue Nile also became strategically important for the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) as the area provided crucial access to Ethiopia guaranteeing supply lines and access to training camps. The citizens of Blue Nile became increasingly drawn into the war throughout the 1990s as the SPLA expanded the offensive front further north and centre-periphery divides enflamed anti-Khartoum sentiment, pushing many citizens of Blue Nile into the ranks of the SPLA. Areas of southern Blue Nile, around Yabos, Kurmuk and Giessan, were held by the SPLA

[1] Amanda Hsiao, North Sudan's post-independence conflict spreads to Blue Nile State. Christian Science Monitor, 8 September 2011, http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Africa/Africa-Monitor/2011/0908/North-Sudan-s-post-independence-conflict-spreads-to-Blue-Nile-state. Accessed 20 November 2012

firstly in 1987 and later 1997 and were heavily targeted by government forces throughout the war leading to the displacement of communities into Ethiopia.

The area was effectively split into a northern SAF-aligned territory and southern Blue Nile fighting alongside the SPLM under the command of Malik Agar. Even with the shift to joint administration in 2005, Blue Nile was commonly considered as two administrative units with the northern areas including Damazin, Bau and Roseres under the control of the Government of Sudan and southern Blue Nile including Kurmuk and Geissan administered by the SPLM[2]. This split within Blue Nile pre-dates the north-south civil war and the 1920 British Closed District Ordinance which changed the status of Abyei also allocated areas around the Ingassana Hills and Kurmuk to the southern administration.

During the second civil war, approximately 165 000 people displaced inside and outside Blue Nile State[3]. The majority of these were from the southern part and moved either into Ethiopia or northwards into SAF controlled areas around Damazin and Roseres. Throughout the war, northern Blue Nile benefitted from support from the central government whereas the southern areas where cut off from aid from 1989 until 2002. Conditions for displaced people in the northern areas were better than for those forced into Ethiopia. UNHCR estimated that 88% of people displaced or returned to northern Blue Nile were, by 2005, farming their own land[4]. In the southern areas the predominantly agricultural population still depended on assistance transported from Ethiopia for 90% of their food requirements in 2005[5]. Communities displaced from southern Blue Nile into Ethiopia and southern Sudan during the war faced extreme difficulties first from the overthrow of Mengitsu's Derg regime in 1991 forcing displacement back into Sudan and then the split within the SPLA igniting internal conflict and forcing displacement back into Ethiopia by 1994. With the 2005 CPA, south Blue Nile stabilised to enable return and rebuild.

From the CPA to the Resurgence of Civil War

The relative stability provided by the end of the second civil war was particularly fragile in Blue Nile where unresolved underlying conflicts over political power and access to resources continued. The National Congress Party (NCP) accused the SPLM of election fraud after Malik Agar was elected governor in the April 2010 election while the SPLM complained that Khartoum failed to invest in the state to overcome poverty[6]. Additionally, the heightening of the Roseires Dam and reviving of irrigated agriculture displaced tens of thousands of local residents[7].

[2] Ibid
[3] UNHCR report, Voluntary repatriation of refugees from Gambella, Ethiopia to Blue Nile State, Sudan, Mission Report October 2005, http://www.unhcr.org/43aa76614.pdf accessed 19 November 2012
[4] Ibid
[5] Ibid
[6] Sudan Human Security Baseline Assessment, The conflict in Blue Nile¸ Small Arms Survey, 20 August 2012
[7] Ibid

The CPA provisions were meant to enable a realignment of political, economic and security power in Blue Nile. Popular consultations were held across the state from January 2011 and although the process was flawed[8], early reports indicated calls for more autonomy and control over political decision-making and governance of natural resources[9]. However, as South Sudan prepared for independence, insecurity spread from Abyei to South Kordofan and Blue Nile stalling the consultation process. Following the seizure of Abyei in May 2011, President Omar al-Bashir gave a deadline of 1 June 2011 for all SPLA forces to leave northern areas. In spite of CPA joint security provisions for Abyei, South Kordofan and Blue Nile, this decree signalled the breakdown of interim arrangements in the three areas. An arc of insecurity quickly spread as organised SAF battalions used heavy artillery, tanks and aerial bombardment to forcefully displace tens of thousands of people into South Sudan. In both Abyei and Blue Nile, SAF claimed the SPLA instigated the clashes; however, the reaction from Khartoum in both areas rapidly moved minor insecurity into a further phase of active civil war.

On the evening of 1 September 2011, fighting erupted in and around Damazin. On 2 September 2011, a state of emergency was declared in Blue Nile and the SPLM-N governor, Malik Agar, was dismissed and replaced by a SAF military commander. The same day, SAF fighter jets bombed SPLM strongholds across the state while dozens of tanks and artillery – backed by thousands of fighters linked to Popular Defence Forces – assaulted key positions[10]. On 3 September, the SPLM-N, until then part of the government, was banned as an insurgent rebel militia. Violence continued to escalate with reports of SAF involvement in abuses including indiscriminate aerial bombardment, arbitrary arrest and detention, torture and murder[11]. Villages were razed and by November 2011 more than 30,000 people were seeking shelter in Maban County in South Sudan. Since then the violence has continued in Blue Nile and more than 200,000 civilians have fled to neighbouring South Sudan and Ethiopia. An estimated 110,000 people moved into Maban County and there are expectations of further refugees arriving during the upcoming 2012/13 dry season.

[8] See for example: Carter Center - http://www.cartercenter.org/news/pr/sudan-032111.html
[9] http://unmis.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?tabid=511&ctl=Details&mid=697&ItemID=12047
[10] Sudan Human Security Baseline Assessment, The conflict in Blue Nile, Small Arms Survey, 20 August 2012
[11] See for more information: Human Rights Watch - http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/04/23/sudan-blue-nile-civilians-describe-attacks-abuses and Enough Project - http://www.enoughproject.org/files/Overview%20Sherkole_0.pdf

3. FROM BLUE NILE TO UPPER NILE: OUTLINING THE REFUGEE AND HOST COMMUNITIES

Before Displacement

According to the 2008 Sudan Census, the population of Blue Nile was 832 112 people of whom 47% are women. People between the ages of 6 and 24 make up 46.4% of the population[12]. Socio-economic indicators according to the State Strategic Plan 2007-2011 include[13]:

Illiteracy rate	74.2%
Malaria infection	45.6%
Access to clean water	23.7%
Maternal mortality rate	515/100,000
Under 5 mortality rate	178.2/1,000
Average life expectancy – men	49
Average life expectancy – women	51.2

The predominant source of income was from agriculture with more than 70% of the population's livelihoods dependent on agricultural production from small-scale production or employment in the mechanised farming sector. The nomadic tribes (approximately 12% of the population) are pastoralist and Blue Nile was host to 6-8 million heads of livestock[14]. People in the Ingassana Hills were also engaged in artisanal gold mining while urban areas offered employment in the formal government and economic sectors.

The ethnic composition of the refugee camps in Maban is:

Camp	Population	Composition
Jamam	15 444	Ingassana, Magaya
Doro	43 740	Baldago, Balila, Birga, Dwala, Fur, Ingassana, Jundi, Jum Jum, Magaya, Mayak, Nuba, Sorghum, Uduk
Gendrassa	14 515	Baldago, Balila, Birga, Dwala, Fur, Ingassana, Jundi, Jum Jum, Magaya, Mayak, Nuba, Sorghum, Uduk
Yusif Batil	37 196	Funj, Fur, Ingassana, Jum Jum, Magaya

12 http://www.scribd.com/doc/50453038/19/Political-History-of-Blue-Nile
13 Ibid
14 http://www.scribd.com/doc/50453038/19/Political-History-of-Blue-Nile

The majority populations of the camps come from the Ingassana, Uduk and Jum Jum communities. The following section focuses on the Ingassana and Uduk as specific case studies to reflect on how socio-political and historical experiences have affected their current displacement experience.

Ingassana: From Isolation to Displacement

The Ingassana began arriving in Maban in November 2011 and make up the majority of the refugee population, far outnumbering the other refugee ethnic groups as well as the host community. Originally from the Ingassana Hills of the eastern part of southern Blue Nile State, the Ingassana were one of the largest ethnic groups in Blue Nile.

Although the Ingassana Hills have since the 1920's been administrative linked with South Sudan and the Ingassana are generally regarded by northerners as southerners and "infidels", they have had little constructive engagement with the south and have until the current displacement lived a self-sufficient and isolated life[15]. The impact of being administratively linked to the south until the independence of Sudan meant that the Ingassana had very little access to development and services putting them at a distinct disadvantage when the area opened up to Arab and Fellata traders in the 1950s. The marginalisation and pattern of secondary status was perpetuated by post-independence regimes pursuing Arabisation and Islamisation policies to the detriment of African tribes. These policies had particularly severe impacts on the Ingassana. For example, during the 1985 famine, the Islamic relief organisation, Dawa Islamiyya, distributed food aid in the Ingassana Hills only to those who proved faithful to Islam[16]. Although many people have converted to Islam since then, there is still a strong connection to their own spirituality and sacred practices. Perceptions that the Ingassana practice special magic and rituals remain and this still has a strong place in the community. It also explains why even as a largely Islamic society, they do not enforce Islamic law or strict adherence to some practices, such as banning the consumption of alcohol.

The Ingassana societal organisation is based on a system of hierarchal leadership from the nazir to omdas and shiekhs. The hierarchal organisation provides for a networked but semi-autonomous form of decentralised decision-making. This is enabled by a social structure which supports and affirms strong unified family structures. This is exemplified through marriage practices and the web of obligations and privileges that flow from marriage. For example, dowry is paid in livestock and/or service during which the future husband will work on the lands or with the livestock of the bride's family for a defined period of time usually negotiated by and in debt to the bride's maternal uncle. Upon marriage the couple will build a house in the enclave of the wife's maternal uncle. Similarly, in the Ingassana language, the words for 'brother' and 'sister' are used for all kindred extended

[15] See http://www.sudanupdate.org/REPORTS/PEOPLES/ING.HTM Accessed 20 November 2012
[16] Ibid

family[17]. Societal obligations stem from extended family relations as well as within age-sets and geographic units[18].

The authority structures have remained unchanged for many years. In June 2012, Acted produced a report on community mobilisation in Jamam camp which outlined the authority structure of the Ingassana as operating under Nazir Afandi Badi who has been leader for the past ten years. Under the Nazir are 8 omdas and then a further 64 shiekhs each ruling a village. Even in displacement the Ingassana have retained their socio-political organisational structure with each omda able to exercise geographic independence within the refugee camps as they have settled in village groupings.

Part of the reason for the high levels of social cohesion amongst the Ingassana is that their experiences since the independence of Sudan has been of extreme external pressure on their livelihoods and survival but without massive displacement and the erosion of social capital. For example, the large-scale mechanised farming schemes of the 1970s handed over large concessions of Ingassana land to northern-owned agricultural companies pushing them into smaller and more tight knit groupings with less land available for agriculture. Similarly, during the second civil war, the Government of Sudan relocated war-displaced people from other parts of Blue Nile into villages around the Ingassana Hills to work on the privately owned agricultural schemes and in the chromium mine[19].

Exploitation and suffering at the hands of outsiders continued throughout the second civil war as both SAF and the SPLA attacked Ingassana villages: in December 1985, following an SPLA attack at the chromium mine in Jam, SAF reprisals killed more than 500 people and burned and looted villages; after the SPLA captured Kurmuk and Geissan in November 1987, SAF and aligned militia targeted “African” tribes of Blue Nile including the Ingassana, burning villages throughout southern Blue Nile and killing hundreds of people; then in August and September 1990, the SPLA attacked Ingassana villages for the first time, destroying and looting houses and stealing cattle[20].

The experience of the Ingassana is one of marginalisation by both north and south. The northerners, Arab traders and Fellata see them as conspirators with the South and more aligned with African identity and interests. This perception fuelled aggressive Arabisation policies in the area and enabled the capture of large swathes of Ingassana land for national development schemes that benefited the elite. However, the Ingassana have never been totally accepted as southerners either with their distinct language and social practices keeping them apart. Additionally, they are perceived by some southerners as an Islamic society that cannot be totally trusted.

[17] Information on Ingassana social practices available in Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan, C.G Seligman and B. Seligman (London: Routledge 1932) and verified through field interviews and observation.
[18] Anthropological scholar, EE Evans-Pritchard provides a detailed overview of Ingassana social organisation from age-sets, kinship groups, villages and cantons. EE Evans-Pritchard, A preliminary account of the Ingassana tribe in Fung province. Sudan Notes and Records (1927) Volume 10 pp69-83.
[19] Minority Rights Group, http://.www.sudanupdate.org/REPORTS/PEOPLES/ING.HTM
[20] Ibid

Amongst the first arrivals in Upper Nile, the initial influxes of Ingassana moved from Blue Nile with much of their livestock. These were large-scale organised movements of communities whose leadership orchestrated the movement before the conflict had severely affected their livelihoods. This is the first time the Ingassana have displaced in such large numbers. The impact of losing their fertile farmland has been devastating on people's livelihoods but their culture and socio-political structures have remained intact.

Uduk: Continuing Cycles of Displacement

The Uduk are one of the sub-groups of the Mabaan. The Mabaan are of Luo origin, related in language to the Shillluk, Anyuak, Dinka and Nuer[21]. The Uduk lived mainly in the Kurmuk and Chali regions of southern Blue Nile. During the second civil war, this area saw intense clashes between the SPLM and SAF (and SAF-aligned Popular Defence Forces) which resulted in the large-scale displacement of the Uduk community into Ethiopia. The effects on the Uduk community has been devastating: multiple displacements; high death rates; the destruction of local economies; and the regrouping of communities under patronage networks loyal at different times to governments, rebel movements, warlords and aid agencies[22].

Amongst the noticeable effects of the war were the over 7000 anti-personnel mines, anti-tank mines and explosive ordinance found and destroyed from March 2007 - July 2010 in southern Blue Nile alone[23]. Approximately 18 000 Uduk fled into Ethiopia[24] during the war and thousands of people lost their lives and livelihoods. By 2005 when international support for the repatriation of Sudanese refugees began, the Uduk were amongst the most vulnerable[25]. At the time, the Uduk population was made up mostly of people under the age of 18, most of whom had grown up in refugee camps and had no productive livestock or livelihood options[26].

The high levels of vulnerability within the Uduk community, both in 2005 and in the current displacement, are due in large part to the multiple displacements that occurred during the war and the resultant erosion of livelihoods and social capital. At the start of the SPLA offensive in Blue Nile in 1986, Uduk villages fled en masse to Ethiopia and were settled in UNHCR camps in Tsore, near Asosa. Uduk refugees acquired the reputation of being "model refugees" as they had maintained their family groups and leadership structures; had brought tools with them and were able to cultivate

[21] Information on Uduk social practices available in Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan, C.G Seligman and B. Seligman (London: Routledge 1932) and verified through field interviews and observation.
[22] Wendy James, Minority Rights Group report on the Uduk http://www.sudanupdate.org/REPORTS/PEOPLES/uduk.htm Accessed 20 November 2012
[23] http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/28A2A85548B793DCC12577C700313078-Full_Report.pdf Accessed 19 November 2012
[24] According to Wendy James, there were some exaggerations in the camp figures as other minority groups took shelter under the Uduk umbrella and there had never been clear social or cultural boundaries in southern Blue Nile with a good deal of intermixture and bilingualism. She estimates that the Uduk population would have been in the mid-twenty thousand at the start of the second civil war.
[25] UNHCR report, Voluntary repatriation of refugees from Gambella, Ethiopia to Blue Nile State, Sudan, Mission Report October 2005, http://www.unhcr.org/43aa76614.pdf accessed 19 November 2012
[26] Ibid

and put the surrounding bush and forest to productive use[27]. However, in January 1990, during the Ethiopian civil war, the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) overtook Asosa resulting in heavy aerial bombardment from the Derg government. The UNHCR camp was destroyed during the fighting and the entire area was heavily looted. Fleeing the area, Uduk refugees were ambushed by the OLF in a ravine near the Yabus valley[28]. The camp survivors that made it to the Yabus Bridge in Sudan were forced southwards by aerial bombardment from the Sudanese air force and found themselves for the first time, seeking refuge in Maban County[29]. The SPLA in Maban "strongly advised" the Uduk to flee further south back into Ethiopia to Itang[30]. For the survivors from Asosa, 1990 and 1991 were years of wondering displacement moving between Ethiopia, Sudan, SPLA-held southern Sudan areas and back into Ethiopia. Many people were lost along the way.

In June 1991, Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) was able to open relief programming in the southern sector. For the Uduk and other people displaced along the eastern border, this was centralised in the area around Nasir, on the south side of the Sobat. Moving back into Sudan, the Uduk community once again faced aerial bombardments from SAF before settling in the designated area. The OLS effort in Nasir, as within other parts of the south, was manipulated and restricted by the Khatoum regime. Aid for displaced people was never sufficient. Compounding the difficulties of displacement in Nasir was the split within the SPLA in September 1991 and the manipulation of aid by the SPLA-Nasir that occurred thereafter. By June 1992, with a lack of food and security failing, the majority of the refugees in Nasir left once again for Ethiopia where the Uduk were finally settled in camps in Khor Bonga in early 1993[31].

Upon the signing of the CPA, the Uduk were amongst the first communities to rally for international support to repatriate and strongly advocated for assisted returns by December 2005. Unfortunately, the immense relocation challenges saw a slower than desired return and many Uduk returned to rebuild homes and villages without any basic services or security. Additionally, although land in rural areas was owned and shared amongst communities, people returning to urban centres, especially in Kurmuk, found their homes and land occupied by SPLM/A and southern loyalists[32]. Return was a difficult process for the Uduk and even with international support in the form of livestock restocking programmes (mostly goats), water, sanitation and health services and agricultural extension support most people started rebuilding rural livelihoods from scratch and found urban centres occupied by a new elite. The years of displacement had also negatively affected social cohesion, eroded social capital and community resilience.

[27] Wendy James, Minority Rights Group report on the Uduk http://www.sudanupdate.org/REPORTS/PEOPLES/uduk.htm Accessed 20 November 2012
[28] Ibid
[29] Ibid
[30] Ibid
[31] Ibid
[32] Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan, C.G Seligman and B. Seligman (London: Routledge 1932)

When the Uduk displaced to Maban County, it was less than five years since their return from Ethiopia. Reports from international partners indicate that even in 2008, returnees were still living in temporary shelters[33]. As a largely agricultural population, the lack of livestock and recent displacement has meant that the Uduk were particularly vulnerable during this cycle of displacement. They have very little resilience or capital on which to draw in times of crisis as recovery has been stalled due to the multiple displacements from 1987-1993, the refugee experience from 1993-2005, the return from 2005-2011 and then the re-emergence of conflict. This experience has been similar for other southern Blue Nile minority ethnic groups such as the Mayak and Jum Jum but none have been as extremely affected by mass multiple displacement as the Uduk.

Mabaan: From Refugee To Host

The Mabaan are a sub-Saharan Nilotic people related in language to the Shilluk, Anyauk, Dinka and Nuer[34]. The Mabaan are made up of several independent groups which spread from Upper Nile to Blue Nile. For the purposes of this discussion, the focus will be on the Mabaan that are settled in Maban County and not on the broader ethnographic grouping which includes other groups now living amongst the refugee community. The diversity which characterises Mabaan and sub-groupings within the Mabaan were affected by the war and ethnic cleavages were reinforced through patterns of displacement and identification with different patronage systems loyal to government, rebel leaders and traditional authorities. Much of what is known about the Mabaan today is limited to a group of people specifically residing in Maban County which ignores the spread of inter-linkages between sub-tribes but remains relevant. For example, when the Uduk, Jum Jum and Mayak arrived in Maban County in late 2011 and early 2012, the leaders of the refugee community sought out the Mabaan omda. They shared meals and exchanged information on how to live together in the county[35]. This stands in contrast to the more polarised feelings between the Mabaan and Ingassana.

Mabaan society is more loosely structured than some other Luo groups. Scattered patterns of family settlement are common with married couples sometimes building houses outside of family compounds. Although there is a system of village chiefs, this is not a hereditary position and is based on community selection (usually because of status measured in livestock or number of children). Additionally, the power of the chief seems limited and the ability to make binding decisions is restricted both by the geographical spread of the community and the lack of clear election procedures that provide for broad legitimacy[36].

[33] See for example: UNICEF, An investment on return: UNICEF and ECHO support the formerly displaced families of eastern Sudan. Available online http://www.unicef.org/sudan/partners_4960.html Accessed 19 November 2012
[34] Information on Mabaan social practices available in Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan, C.G Seligman and B. Seligman (London: Routledge 1932) and verified through field interviews and observation.
[35] Interviews with Mabaan and Mayak conducted in Maban County November 2012
[36] Interviews with Mabaan community conducted in Maban County November 2012

Marriage obligations are based on service on the land of the wife's family coupled with some dowry contributions usually made in pigs, goats and tools. Even through service obligations, marriage does not come with increased social obligations between families. For example, if a husband dies, his brother can marry his wife but only after negotiation of another service period or dowry. Men can take up multiple wives and women are able to divorce upon return of bride wealth. Historically, the Mabaan have been known for internal blood feuds; even coming into the land of another community or village could start a blood feud between areas. This is related to communal practices of land ownership and rights over land and natural resource usage. According to ethnographic documents from the colonial era, the Mabaan used to plant, own and inherit trees[37]. Although we have been unable to determine whether this is still widely practiced, the notion of communal ownership at family or village level is upheld. Most of the Mabaan livelihoods rely on subsistence agriculture with limited livestock mostly in the form of pigs, chickens and goats. Being an agrarian society most of their social values relate to land rights and usage and agricultural practices[38].

As with other communities in Upper Nile, the Mabaan were badly affected by the second civil war. Not only was the area central to the SPLA war effort until 1991 because of its rear operating bases and access to support from Ethiopia, oil installations around Melut and Palioc were of strategic significance for both sides. A 2006 report by the European Coalition on Oil in Sudan estimated that oil production in Melut County could generate well over $10 million per day[39]. From 1991-2000, the areas around the expanding oil infrastructure were subject to aerial bombing, attacks from SAF and SAF-aligned militia (especially SPLA-Nasir) and mass displacement. All this occurred against the backdrop of an increasingly violent and ethnically fragmented civil war.

After the split within the SPLA, Upper Nile became central in the inter-south violence as Lam Akol and Riek Machar's SPLA-Nasir forces were based in Fashoda and Nasir respectively. For the Mabaan, there was no clear allegiance to either Akol, who is a Shilluk, or Machar, a Nuer. As the internal politics of the liberation movement became increasingly divided on ethnic loyalties, the Mabaan sided with the SPLA-Torit (under John Garang), probably based on a need to preserve their place in Upper Nile in the face of Shilluk and Nuer dominance of the region. Additionally, the intense fighting between SPLA and SAF in Blue Nile during the late 1980s had spilled over into Maban County with SAF aerial bombardments along the Yabus river (which runs through Maban County) and forced displacement.

For the SPLA, oil infrastructure was a legitimate military target and in Upper Nile SPLA forces moved into offensive positions to strike within the Melut and Palioc areas. Maban County was caught in the middle of this and between 1997 and 2002 control of the area changed hands between the SPLA, SAF and SAF-aligned SPLA-Nasir (and later Machar's South Sudan Independence Movement) on

[37] Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan, C.G Seligman and B. Seligman (London: Routledge 1932)
[38] Profile on Maban from Gurtong, http://www.gurtong.net/Peoples/PeoplesProfiles/Maban/tabid/212/Default.spx Accessed 20 November 2012
[39] European Coalition on Oil in Sudan (ECOS), Oil Development in northern Upper Nile, Sudan. May 2006. Available http://www.ecosonline.org/reports/2006/ECOS%20Melut%20Report%20final%20-text%20only.pdf Accessed 20 November 2012

numerous occasions[40]. International assistance during the war was limited due to very poor infrastructure, most especially the lack of an air link to Maban County, and insecurity[41]. The exact number of people displaced from Maban is difficult to ascertain with an estimated 20 000 people having fled between 2000 and 2005. Mass displacement and the interruption of essential livelihoods is confirmed by satellite imagery from PRINS Engineering which shows productive agricultural land use in the area in 2000 and then large areas of unproductive land in 2005.

Since 2006, the Maban County Commissioner has advocated for compensation for the Mabaan based on abuses that occurred because of the oil expansion and the resultant environmental damage. The foundation for these claims is that Adar (a central oil producing area) belongs to the Mabaan people who have been forced off the area[42]. In 2006, before moving back to Blue Nile and later taking up the position of governor, Malik Agar was Minister for Investment in the Government of National Unity. In an interview with ECOS, he supported the Maban Commissioner in calling for compensation for the systematic exploitation of local resources[43]. From then onwards companies operating in the area were ordered by the County Commissioner to pay for the gravel they extract and the trees that are felled for charcoal or building.

Throughout the CPA period, there were concerns in Maban because of the continued presence of large numbers of SAF forces and fears that security forces and oil companies may again conspire to cause tensions and violence between communities[44]. The Mabaan tried to exert control over their resources by increasing taxation on external use of natural resources and restricting land usage rights. It was only with the end of the CPA period and the dissolution of the Joint Integrated Units (which in itself was accompanied by violence in Malakal and other parts of Upper Nile) that Maban County fully came under Government of South Sudan and SPLA control.

[40] Ibid
[41] Ibid
[42] Ibid
[43] Ibid
[44] Ibid

4. DISHARMONY: INCREASING TENSIONS AND COMPETITION

From the start of the refugee crisis in Upper Nile, there was concern that disharmony between the refugees and host communities could disintegrate into violence. The sheer scale of the influx of people and livestock directly affected the livelihoods and coping strategies of the Mabaan communities.

In September 2012, violence between host and refugee populations left over 20 people injured in Maban. Fighting in Gendrassa market at a local brew stall resulted in the death of one Ingassana man and spread into various incidents of harassment, assault and intimidation. Tensions between host and refugee communities have manifested differently in the camps with Gendrassa and Doro seeing the highest levels of violence and Jamam and Batil generally more stable.

Competition for natural resources is creating compounding livelihoods crises in which both host and refugee communities are struggling to find coping strategies. For the Ingassana, disease has wiped out large amounts of their livestock. According to focus group discussions, more than half of livestock have already died. In August 2012, CESVI conducted a livestock assessment in Yusif Batil and found that the animal mortality rate was already at 18%. Yusif Batil was only opened in May 2012. Ingassana community members in Batil and Gendrassa have explained that in Blue Nile that had access to vaccinations and animal health services but with no such facilities available to them in Maban, their livestock have been particularly vulnerable to disease[45]. The spread of disease has negatively impacted on the host community as well where CESVI recorded mortality rates at 22%[46]. The loss of livestock is particularly important for the Mabaan and Ingassana as this represents a steady erosion of their safety net and community resilience. People rely on livestock as a source of income during times of need and the ability to sell livestock to gain access to other essential items is a key coping strategy. A local government representative concurred that livestock disease is the gravest threat being faced by both the Mabaan and refugees[47].

Selling livestock has also become more difficult because the extent of the influx has driven market prices down. The Mabaan did not keep large quantities of livestock and were in the process of rebuilding livelihoods after the unpredictability and displacement of the war. Through decreasing market prices, the value of people's savings has diminished; as has their ability to sell some numbers of animals for additional money to cover food and other expenses during times of need.

Even with the impact of disease beginning to affect livestock numbers, a large amount of damage has already been done to agricultural production. The CESVI study estimated that just within Yusif Batil, the land requirements of the livestock of the refugees amounted to 2,300km2. Unfortunately, there has been no agreement between the Ingassana and the Mabaan about grazing land rights. The Mabaan are now reporting that the Ingassana livestock have destroyed their sorghum harvest

[45] Discussions conducted in Yusif Batil and Gendrassa in November 2012
[46] Ruta Nimkar and Donato Gulino, Status Report: Livestock influx into Yusuf Batil 15 August 2012, CESVI
[47] Interview at county commission headquarters in November 2012

and other crops leaving them facing food insecurity[48]. The Mabaan are facing a long dry season ahead in which they are depending on the meagre harvest and limited livestock supplies to buy food. The Mabaan have appealed to the county authorities to intervene and the South Sudan Police Service (SSPS) has arrested Ingassana for grazing their livestock on agricultural land[49].

Outside of livestock and agriculture, the next key livelihoods platform comes from the range of income generation from the felling of trees. For the refugee communities being able to cut trees is essential for the building of shelters, the selling of poles and building materials and the making of charcoal. The forests serve the same purposes for the host community. The sheer numbers of additional people now drawing from the forestry resources have resulted in noticeable deforestation of the area over the past months.

The Mabaan initially requested that refugees only cut certain trees and to try to use branches for firewood instead of the destroying the entire plant. From the perspective of the Mabaan, the refugees failed to stick to the agreements and in July 2012, the cutting of all trees was strictly forbidden by the Ministry of Forestry. Since then there has been an increase in incidents between refugees and host communities when people are out gathering firewood; women are especially vulnerable to intimidation, sexual violence and harassment.

The general sources of tension between host and refugee communities in Maban are:

- The cutting of trees and selling of wood
- Grazing land for livestock and the destruction of crops by livestock
- Theft of livestock
- Access to employment
- Access to cultivation land for both host and refugee communities

Maban County is not a heavily populated area but the current settlements are creating an intense and concentrated pressure on land and water supplies. The carrying capacity of the land available is not sufficient to meet the livelihoods needs of the host and refugee communities currently occupying the area. Part of the challenge is that the livelihoods strategies are not complementary – i.e. pastoral and agricultural. Additionally, though, there has not been enough diversification of income generation for people to be able to survive without their core livelihood. This is manifesting differently in the different communities with changing levels of vulnerability and coping strategies. DRC Protection Monitors have noted changing levels of concern in the camps over the months from a focus on basic services including water, shelter and food to the inclusion by October 2012 of concerns related to income generation and the ability to purchase clothes and other essential non-food items.

[48] Discussions with Mabaan community in November 2012
[49] Anecdotal evidence provided by both the Mabaan and Ingassana

Even though there are still significant basic needs in some parts of the camps (for example, needing more tents in parts of Doro and Jamam and problems with delayed food distribution in Doro in November 2012[50]), the squeeze on livelihoods is beginning to show and what resilience was available within the refugee and host communities has steadily eroded.

Ingassana: Livelihoods, Vulnerabilities and Coping Strategies

One of the greatest strengths of the Ingassana community is their social capital[51] measured in terms of social cohesion, shared norms and values and sense of identity in relation to others. This has remained largely intact throughout the second civil war and through the mass movement during the current civil war. As found by Luka Biong Deng in his seminal study on the impact of civil war in Dinka communities, communities in areas where exogenous violence dominated often experience a deepening and strengthening of bonding social capital[52]. This has been reinforced by the lack of displacement until the latest round of conflict.

There are distinctly positive dimensions to having a solid social capital base in the current refugee setting: there is a distinct and trusted leadership structure; communal shared assets; strong kinship ties; community pride and sense of agency; and a level of predictability[53]. However, as social capital is also affected by a sense of place and territory, displacement affects inter- and intra-communal relations. Because of the strength of the social capital within the Ingassana community, the danger is that displacement will reinforce negative social capital and accelerate perceptions of isolation and marginalisation, separate identities and the withdrawal into atomised units. This can, and in some ways has already started to, manifest in Maban as polarising ethnic divides between the Ingassana and other refugee groups as well as the Mabaan. Rhetoric within other communities about the Ingassana is inflammatory: the Ingassana are seen as the problem makers, fighting with others and insulting local ways of life[54].

For the Ingassana, when their survival in Blue Nile was threatened, they were able to move to Maban with a safety net including their livestock. As livestock disease has impacted on the overall wealth of the community, people are beginning to seek means to bolster their safety net and guarantee survival. People are asking for increased income generation activities, adult education programmes and ensuring the continuity of the delivery of basic services such as water, education and health care.

[50] In both camps there are perceptions of discrimination against ethnic minorities with groups such as the Mayak, Chale and Magaya reporting that they have not received sufficient tents while the Ingassana have been catered for. International actors should note with concern increasing perceptions of international assistance favouring the Ingassana majority and rumours that Ingassana prevent other groups from accessing assistance.

[51] Social capital can be defined as the shared norms and values that promote social cooperation and define relationships between people (both within and between communities).

[52] Luka Biong Deng, Social capital and civil war: the Dinka communities in Sudan's civil war in African Affairs 109/435, pp231-250. 11 February 2010

[53] If partners understand the norms and values of the community, there would be a level of predictability and certainty in the relationship/ an understanding or anticipation of responses and suitable programmatic inputs.

[54] Focus group discussions with Mabaan, Mayak and Uduk in November 2012

There has been conflicts, some violent, within the Ingassana community as well as between Ingassana and Mabaan. This has remained at a low intensity, sometimes simmering to the surface and always with the risk of accelerating rapidly. Within the camps, people complain of waiting in long queues to get water and that fighting can break out. Similarly, there have been squabbles within the market and at informal bars selling home-made alcohol. As with all the refugee communities in Maban, the cutting of wood by the Ingassana is restricted by law and there has been harassment associated with this. However, the sheer numbers of Ingassana versus the host community offer a degree of protection and if pushed they would be able to impose their needs – a balance of power of which all sides are very much aware. There is a perception that the Ingassana are not taking the needs of the host community very seriously as they continue to cut large amounts of wood for construction[55] and allow their livestock to graze freely on open and agricultural land.

Uduk: Livelihoods, Vulnerabilities and Coping Strategies

The Uduk population in Maban are strikingly vulnerable. From focus group discussions and observations, people are feeling powerless to affect change in their situation and a sense of hopelessness was expressed. Both within the Uduk and Mayak communities, people spoke about feeling like they were in prison with everything forbidden and no way to act independently to secure their livelihoods. People mentioned feeling that they were hated by the host community who go out of their way to deny survival.

For the Uduk, this round of displacement came so soon after the war and the multiple displacements during the war had severely eroded social capital and community resilience. This has manifest as a lack of social cohesion, especially an erosion of tradition, traditional leadership and authority. In terms of daily survival, as agricultural communities who moved with very little livestock, the Uduk have extremely limited independent livelihoods options; they are almost entirely dependent on international aid. As soon as there is a problem with the delivery of aid (such as delays in food distribution which have occurred on several occasions due to logistical and supply chain problems), the reliance on negative coping mechanisms increases. This has and continues to manifest in terms of theft within the host and refugee areas, domestic violence[56] and increased risk taking to secure income.

The dependence on international aid has two important dimensions: food and shelter. The Uduk complain that there has not been sufficient distribution of tents and plastic sheets for shelter to cater for the current population and new arrivals[57]. People begin to construct shelters – tukuls – from natural materials relying on grass for roofs. However, the Mabaan have started restricting the cutting

[55] Gendrassa market is a case in point in which the market stalls have been constructed with large amounts of wood and yet some stalls remain empty of goods.
[56] Anecdotal evidence from international partners offering support services in Doro camp indicates a link between domestic abuse and lack of food.
[57] Although the number of new arrivals for the Uduk community is expected to be quite low, the lack of shelter is problematic for other minority groups (Mayak and Magaya) who are expecting an influx in dry season.

of grass by refugees and have been accused by the Uduk of attacking them when cutting grass, taking their tools and in one instance burning the grass so that the Uduk could not cut it.

Regarding food, there have been distribution delays. For the Uduk, alternative access to food includes cultivation, fishing and income generation. There has been no discussion on cultivation land for refugees and this is currently restricted. Some Uduk have been planting small amounts between their tents trying to harvest some groundnuts. Fishing has been restricted and the Uduk complain that the Mabaan have stolen fish from them if they see them fishing. On income generation, some members of the Uduk community have tried cutting trees to sell wood but this is also restricted by new laws and they are harassed if caught, tools are confiscated and people have even been imprisoned. With no clear decision from the Government of South Sudan on whether or not refugees can seek employment, formal employment opportunities are limited.

With so few options, the almost palpable pessimism amongst the Uduk community is justifiable. With no alternative income, the limited safety nets with which they arrived have been eroded and a sense of powerlessness and lack of ability to affect change has taken root. The Uduk are entirely dependent on the international community as protectors, providers and advocates. However, given their experience during the war and during current displacement, it is with a very realistic pessimism well known by the Uduk communities. Their communal experience during displacement makes trust for the international community and the Government of South Sudan difficult.

5. DISILLUSION: MARGINALISATION AND PERCEPTIONS OF INEQUALITIES

It is common in refugee settings for host communities to express perceptions of marginalisation or exclusion from the services being provided to refugee populations. In the case of Maban these perceptions of marginalisation are increased by the low levels of service delivery and assistance being provided in Maban before the refugee influx and informed by the hardships experienced by people from Maban as refugees during the second civil war. Since the start of the emergency operation in November 2011, international actors recognised the need to practice conflict sensitivity and extend services and support to the host community. However, with the extensive and intensive demands placed on international actors by the costly and logistically complex emergency operating environment, support to host community has been lower on the list of priorities. Indeed, it was only after tensions between host and refugee communities turned violent in September 2012 that concerted international attention moved to the host community needs and perceptions.

There has been significant investment in the extension of services and secondary benefits of the emergency operation to the host community and local authorities. These include:

- Road improvement projects
- Rehabilitation of the airstrip
- Free health care is provided to host community members in all four camps
- Bunj Hospital has been upgraded
- Health outreach projects include vaccination, hygiene promotion, de-worming and distribution of mosquito nets
- Food distribution to bridge the hunger gap (April-August)
- Upgrading of water infrastructure and extension of shared water points including boreholes, tap stands and water deliveries
- Building pit latrines and providing training on the construction of pit latrines
- Rehabilitation and construction of schools
- Distribution of seeds and tools, agricultural demonstration plots and agricultural training
- Employment
- Increased trade

There are more initiatives planned to further extend health, education, local administration and livelihoods support over the next year. However, there remains the perception that the host population is not benefitting in an equitable manner from the refugee influx and the expectation that they should receive more benefits from hosting the refugee population. This perception is largely based on how the host community is interpreting the short and long term impact of the refugee population on their livelihoods and social protection strategies. It is also related to the lack of consultation on refugee issues with the host community. For example, well into the current

emergency when refugees needed to be relocated from Jamam camp during the rainy season, there was a perceived lack of consultation with communities living near Doro[58]. There seems to be a lack of coordinated strategy from the side of the international community and national government for dealing with host community consultation and communication on refugee issues.

For the Mabaan, the refugee influx totally disrupted the social, economic and political dynamics of their territory and destroyed the relative tranquillity and the post-CPA emerging sense of predictability. From the perspective of the host community, it is understandable that the presence of the refugees can be perceived as a threat to their livelihoods and cultural system. Their historical experience of outsiders has not been positive and this is a community which has a legacy of marginalisation and the perception of losing out to substantial gains. Almost ironically, part of the compensation demands from the County Commission to oil companies in 2006 was the fixing of the road between Bunj and Jamam.

Paradoxically, in the face of the rapid change affected by the refugee influx, the host community has also become dependent on the refugee community for development and international assistance. With the erosion of their livelihoods and the depletion of resources that guard against vulnerability, assistance from the international community – in terms of jobs and resources – has become more important than before.

[58] Information from international partners working in Maban

6. CONCLUSION: A THREE-PRONGED APPROACH TO SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Although the current levels of violence between refugees and host community members are not especially high, the risk of escalation remains. There is an unacceptably high level of risk because of the perfect storm created between real need and grievance, ethnic-based polarisation and militarisation. The issue of militarisation is outside of the scope of this paper but there is an observable increase in security activity both within and outside the camps and attention can be called to the increasing "securitisation" of the area. This is evident in a more visible and active role being taken by the SSPS for example in road blocks, stopping vehicles and even in some cases harassing refugees and international agencies. There was also an incident in Gendrassa camp where police have been accused of attacking a refugee family at night to steal their goats[59]. Additionally, the presence of armed combatants within and near camps and the availability of weapons increase the risk of confrontations escalating into violence.

The continuing high level of dissatisfaction within the host community indicates that the package of interventions being offered by international actors is failing to address the frustration and feelings of marginalisation. Because the impact of the refugee influx on the host community has affected spheres of social, political and economic space in the short, medium and potentially long term, a strategy to address host-refugee relations needs to build on linkages between survival, resilience and social capital in a coherent, coordinated and comprehensive way. Similarly, within the refugee communities the focus of international assistance on emergency relief has provided for immediate survival but is not particularly suitable to longer-term settlement in the area. As within other refugee contexts, the manner in which the international humanitarian response in Maban has been conducted has potentially undermined the host community, including authorities, and could, in the longer-term, contribute towards the erosion of the agency, resilience and coping mechanisms of the refugee populations[60]. Regardless of the significant difficulties with operating in Maban, the logistical complications, practical challenges of finding water and scale of the emergency that occurred within in a very short time, there are still areas in which the international response could have been stronger and prevented the undermining of local and refugee coping mechanisms.

At an absolute minimum more effort should have focused on understanding the populations that were displaced and the community into which they were displaced. The refugee community is not a homogenous entity, as the case studies of the Ingassana and Uduk have tried to highlight. With the initial emergency response focused on delivering life-saving assistance and organising people into camps to manage the delivery of such assistance, international actors were under incredible pressure to deliver in a very short time. Additionally, the way in which the influx has manifest from the initial flows, to the severe water problems, logistical challenges and then flooding and relocation and more flooding has meant that attention has constantly been diverted to the next immediate crisis.

[59] This case is currently under investigation and two of the officers involved have been detained. (20 November 2012)
[60] See B.E. Harrell-Bond, Imposing Aid: Emergency Assistance to Refugees. Oxford University Press, 1986

This has resulted in a lack of focus on longer-term and strategic priorities and chances to take targeted action at the right time to prevent hostility have been missed. For example, land usage rights were not negotiated and there was no plan for income generation or livestock health. A period of consolidation around the existing camps and interventions is needed.

Dealing with current tensions between the host and refugee populations requires the integration of longer-term and development-oriented programming alongside the emergency response. Unfortunately the need for emergency humanitarian assistance will continue as current needs should be met and an influx of new arrivals is expected. With the conflict in Blue Nile continuing, there are no options for return and some parameters for the integration of the refugees into the host community are required, not in the least because of the dramatic transformation of the rural economy that has already occurred. The types of programming that is required needs to focus on survival, resilience and social capital.

Ultimately, host-refugee relations will turn violent if people cannot see or imagine an alternative solution to the problems of competing livelihoods and survival strategies. International actors can assist in supporting alternative solutions, enabling an integrated local economy and mutually beneficial livelihoods.

The production of this thematic paper was made possible by funding from the United States Government through the Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration.

The contents of this paper are the ideas and opinions of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the organisation or the donor agency.

Danish Demining Group
Borgergade 10, 3rd floor
1300 Copenhagen K
Denmark

Phone: +45 3373 5000
ddg@drc.dk

www.danishdemininggroup.dk