



UNHCR SOUTH SUDAN

Situation Report

No. 0017, 10–11 February 2014

Developments

On 12 February, the UN Secretary-General's Spokesperson issued a statement welcoming the start of the South Sudan political talks in Addis Ababa between the Government and the SPLM/A in opposition, under the auspices of IGAD. The statement noted with deep concern reports of ongoing fighting and skirmishes in parts of Unity and Upper Nile States. It called on all parties to respect the lifesaving work and ensure unhindered freedom of movement of UNMISS and of all humanitarian workers. The statement condemned the use cluster bombs, remnants of which were found last week by the UN Mine Action Service, along the Juba-Bor road, Jonglei State.

On 11 February, the Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs, Valerie Amos, declared a Level 3 (L3) Humanitarian System-Wide Emergency Response for South Sudan for an initial three months after intense consultation with Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Principals. The declaration will ensure an effective response to the humanitarian needs of communities affected by the conflict, which broke out on 15 December.

Security

The situation Upper Nile state remains tense and unpredictable. There have been reported movements of anti-government forces towards Malakal, the capital, from different directions. The SPLA maintains that the town and surrounding areas are heavily guarded, and that pro-government forces are able to resist any attack.

Malakal is noticeably deserted, including the IDP concentration centers that UNHCR has been monitoring. Distribution of NFIs was halted on 11 February following appeals by IDPs amid concerns about the security situation. Aid agencies which had been operating in town, including ICRC and MSF, moved back to the UNMISS Logbase.

Fighting continued in Baliet and Doleb Hill on the periphery of Malakal town, which prompted civilians to move to Malakal, Rom and Melut, mostly with government assistance.

Displacement statistics

- 723,900 internally displaced persons (*Source: OCHA, 10 February 2014*)
- 149,659 refugees in neighbouring countries (*Source: UNHCR, 12 February 2014*)

In Maban County, the situation remains relatively stable. While risk associated with armed conflict is assessed as low, crime-related incidents are on the increase, with reported theft of food items from WFP warehouses in Doro, Gendrassa and Batil camps, of fuel, and of a break in at an INGO compound.

Refugee operations

Upper Nile State

Serious concerns have emerged about the nutrition status of refugees in the Maban camps following an increase in kwashiorkor cases identified at medical health facilities. This indicates poor nutrition in general; kwashiorkor is a manifestation of protein deficiency. In Yusuf Batil camp UNHCR held discussions with MSF-H on strategies to tackle increasing cases of severe acute malnutrition (SAM) among children. Meanwhile, UNHCR and UNICEF visited the MSF-B clinic in Doro camp where four out of 10 hospitalized SAM cases had kwashiorkor.

Similar trends were noted during the hunger gap last year, a period when there is a shortage of other types of foods (animal protein sources, fruit, vegetable) that could fill the nutrient gap not covered by the general food distribution at this particular. In the current cases, preliminary enquiries indicate that affected children are aged under two years and their nutrition needs may have been compromised as their mothers are pregnant or lactating younger siblings. Therefore, Community Nutrition health workers are increasing active screening to detect cases early. Health, WASH and Nutrition partners are reinforcing their actions, particularly regarding improvement of conditions at household level to prevent malnutrition-prone

morbidity such as diarrhea, malaria, pneumonia etc.. At the community level, trained mother-to-mother support groups—comprising women whose children are not malnourished or whose children have recovered—are being mobilized to address the malnutrition and improve feeding practices. In addition, house-to-house visits will be conducted in all four camps with a focus on food, WASH and health determinants of malnutrition.

In all four camps, water pumping hours have been increased to reach 20 liters per person per day, while decommissioning and replacement of latrines is on-going. In response to increasing morbidity and diarrhea trends, health and WASH partners have increased the distribution of oral rehydration salts in the camps, particularly Doro and Yusuf Batil camp.

In Yusuf Batil camp, upgrading of the water system continues with the installation of plinth for one storage tank. The household latrine initiative is in progress; 421 are completed and in use. Hygiene promoters are conducting house-to-house visits and jerry can clean-up campaigns; 909 households (4006 persons) were reached and 18,490 containers cleaned. The key messages are focused on diarrhea prevention.

Internal displacement

UNHCR is participating in the IDP response via the inter-agency collaborative approach under the leadership of the Humanitarian Coordinator.

• Upper Nile State

Continuing rumors of impending attacks are inducing civilians to leave Malakal town for Melut and Rom. Moreover, there has been a marked increase in the number of people entering the UNMISS PoC area.

UNHCR and other humanitarian actors conducted an assessment to Rom and to Palouch to follow up reports there were 34,000 IDPs. A rapid estimate by the mission concluded that there could be no more than 3,000 individuals in Rom. Trucks were seen bringing mainly women and children IDPs to the area, reportedly assisted by the government to move from Baliet and Pigi Counties.

In Palouch, the mission had initially been told of 17,000 individuals but saw only a handful of women and children, not exceeding 60 in number.

It is deduced from the above findings coupled with the monitoring of the situation of IDPs outside the UNMISS PoC Area in Malakal town, that with the exception of Melut and Rom, all the other locations outside the POC area are transit points and IDPs do

not intend to settle there. It has thus been agreed that protection and assistance interventions outside the POC area will focus on Rom and Melut, and that UNHCR will continue monitoring the transit points.

Protection assessments at both locations revealed a very high incidence of single female headed households, extremely elderly individuals, disabled persons and unaccompanied/separated children. The Protection Cluster plans under UNHCR's to conduct comprehensive vulnerability assessment, register vulnerable groups and carry out appropriate interventions through specialized organizations, including family tracing, and referral for psycho-social support. UNHCR will recruit and train monitors to monitor the protection situation.

In Maban County, an inter-agency mission visited Beneshawa on 12 February to re-assess the situation of IDPs, who currently number more than 4,500. Their nutrition status remains stable with a low proxy GAM of 2 %. All children under 15 years of age were given measles and polio vaccination and deworming tablets.

• Unity State

The UNHCR-led an inter-agency assessment of IDPs in Pariang County (24-28 January) verified an estimated 20,000 persons who were directly affected or displaced by the crisis. Local authorities had placed the number at over 53,000. The assessment took place in Diir stream (Panyayiir), the main road to Jamjang, Panlok, Panyang, Panthur and Pariang town and covered at least 80% of IDP locations. The assessment team included WFP, AHA, SP, LWF, County authorities (RRC, CRA).

IDPs reported fleeing attacks in which family members were killed as anti-government fighters looted property and burned houses. Many hid in the bush for days surviving on leaves and wild fruits. Some IDPs have remained in the bush because their houses were burnt. Some are afraid to return as there is no food. Others need government assurances on security before they return.

Assessed priorities include: food, healthcare, water, shelter, blankets, mosquito nets, farm implements and latrine slabs. AHA (medical NGO in Ajuong Thok) has been providing mobile healthcare services in Panyayiir and Gumriak. UNHCR distributed high energy biscuits in some locations during assessment.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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FOR REFUGEE INFORMATION ON THE SOUTH SUDAN SITUATION, VISIT

<http://data.unhcr.org/SouthSudan/regional.php>

