

10 November 2011

Highlights:

- An aerial bombardment of Yida in Unity State on 10 November threatened the safety of 20,000 people displaced from Southern Kordofan and severely restricted relief operations.
- Bombing in Maban County in Upper Nile State from 7-9 November has resulted in an unknown number of people fleeing the area. Humanitarian teams are moving to assess critical humanitarian needs.
- Findings of the recent Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission have further confirmed that the food security situation in South Sudan is likely to worsen in 2012.

I. Situation Overview

The security situation in several parts of South Sudan deteriorated during the week, with bombings reported in Maban County in Upper Nile State from 7-9 November and in Pariang County in Unity State on 10 November. Both locations host large populations of displaced persons who have fled ongoing fighting in Sudan's Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan states. As a result of the Unity attack and recent re-mining in the state, humanitarian access to some 20,000 persons displaced in Yida and over 5,000 persons displaced in Mayom is severely restricted. Rebel militia groups were also active during the week, with an attack in Manyo County in Upper Nile reported on 10 November. No casualties or displacements were reported following the attack. Elsewhere in South Sudan, humanitarian actors focused assistance on responding to the population in Jonglei displaced by inter-communal violence in Uror County, and preparing for the potential return of the Abyei population displaced in Agok and Warrap State. Trains carrying some 2,400 returnees arrived in Greater Bahr el Ghazal by 10 November from Khartoum. On the food security front, findings of the Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission (CFSAM) conducted from 17 October to 4 November confirmed that the food security situation is likely to worsen in 2012.

II. Humanitarian challenges: needs and response

Bombing in Unity threatens security of population displaced from Southern Kordofan

Five bombs were dropped in Pariang County in northern Unity State on 10 November, near the Sudan border in Yida where the population displaced by ongoing fighting in Southern Kordofan in Sudan is located. Two of the bombs fell directly inside the shelter site in Yida and one shell fell near a temporary school. No casualties have been confirmed among the population at the site. The situation of the surrounding population is being assessed. Over 20,000 people are residing at the site, according to the UN Refugee Agency, UNHCR. A UN helicopter was on the ground at the time of the attack and relocated 26 people following the bombing, including one refugee in labour and at least 20 humanitarian workers. Some eight humanitarian workers remained in Yida, along with trained aid workers among the refugee community, to ensure relief assistance continued, including the provision of medical care, and water and sanitation support. Food rations were delivered on 10 November. However, the quantity was only enough to feed the displaced population for one day. Partners were forced to temporarily suspend emergency food distributions since the attack and the food situation is of concern. An assessment of the security situation is scheduled for the end of the week to determine when humanitarian partners can resume relief operation missions. In the meantime, humanitarian partners are preparing alternative sites which could host the population, located at a farther distance from the insecure border area.

Threat of landmines in Unity continue to hamper humanitarian operations

The presence of landmines continued to present a serious concern to humanitarian partners operating in Unity State, with two mine incidents occurring on 5 November. While the first explosion in Guit County did not result in any casualties, the second incident in the Nhialdu area of Rubkona County killed one person and injured another. The Nhialdu road was recently de-mined by the UN Mine Action Coordination Centre (UNMACC), indicating that the exploded mine was likely to have been freshly laid. UNMACC has begun demining roads around Bentiu, but it is expected to take at least until the end of December to clear the Bentiu-Mayom and Bentiu-Tharjat roads, essential transport hubs for the delivery of humanitarian aid.

The security situation in Mayom town remained tense over the week following a rebel militia attack on 29 October. Establishing humanitarian needs has been difficult as much of the civilian population fled to nearby payams (administrative areas) and accessibility is restricted due to the reported presence of landmines and militia. However, preliminary information from rapid humanitarian assessments conducted between 2-4 November indicated that food, shelter and non-food items are the most urgent needs. Despite the severe access restrictions, health partners have been able to airlift 200 kg of anti-malarial drugs to Mayom. Partners have also relocated emergency drugs and medical supplies from Bentiu to Mayom, and pre-positioned 2.5 metric tons of drugs from Juba to Rubkona County, to replenish stocks used in Mayom. An inter-agency mission will travel to Mayom in coming days to assess the humanitarian situation and plan humanitarian assistance to the affected population.

Security deteriorates in Upper Nile following bombing in Maban County

Security conditions in Upper Nile worsened over the week, with bombing and rebel militia attacks reported in the state. In Maban County, aerial bombardments reportedly took place on 7 November in Yafta, 8 November in New Quffa and 9 November in Marinji and Balatouma (in Blue Nile), according to UNMISS. The airstrikes in Marinji and Balatouma reportedly resulted in the death of 11 persons and injury of 29, 11 of whom were airlifted to Malakal for emergency medical treatment. It has been difficult to determine actual numbers of displaced by the attacks. Local authorities have reported tens of thousands may have fled. A security assessment, accompanied by humanitarian partners, will be conducted in Bunj starting 13 November to verify information and determine critical humanitarian needs. Elsewhere in Upper Nile, clashes took place in Kuek payam in Manyo County between rebel militia groups and the South Sudan Armed Forces (SSAF) on 10 November. No casualties or humanitarian needs were reported as a result of the attack.

Planning underway for potential return of displaced population to Abyei

A contingency planning meeting took place between humanitarian partners and government officials from South Sudan and Sudan in Agok, 45 km south of Abyei town, on 10 November, to prepare for the potential return of the displaced population to Abyei and the migration of Misseriya pastoralists. Planning scenarios were drafted to inform the overall humanitarian strategy regarding the return of the displaced population and potential humanitarian consequences of conflict arising from the Misseriya migration. Humanitarian Coordinators of both countries will meet from 15-16 November in Juba to discuss further cross-border issues, including Abyei.

Meanwhile, the response to the population displaced from Abyei continued in Agok and Warrap State. Water, sanitation and hygiene partners provided 600 plastic buckets and 100 cartons of washing soap to the displaced population in Agok. These will be distributed during the hygiene promotion activities in schools and by families who are targeted by a household water treatment campaign. A polio campaign vaccinated some 16,800 children under five from 8-11 November, including displaced children in Agok. While 185 metric tons of food provided by the Government of South Sudan was delivered by humanitarian partners to Agok in October, a shortage of food stocks has meant that no further food deliveries have been conducted in November.

Humanitarian response continues to conflict-affected population in Jonglei

Humanitarian relief efforts continued to communities displaced by inter-communal violence in Jonglei's Uror County in mid-August. In Pieri payam, distribution began on 4 November of 600 mosquito nets, blankets and temporary shelter. Three education facilitators arrived to Pieri on 2 November to provide support in terms of learning and psycho-social training for teachers. The education cluster also delivered blackboards, some 40 text books and recreation material to the displaced population. A polio campaign provided vaccinations for displaced children under five years in Uror County. In Yuai payam, the initial results of a protection assessment for the displaced indicated that a sense of insecurity remained in the area and fears persisted of another attack.

Elsewhere in Jonglei, unconfirmed reports were received of community youths on the move in northern Bor and Duk counties, leading to women and children in some areas fleeing due to fears of attack. It is thought

the youths are from remote areas of Pibor County that are unaware of the ongoing peace processes between the Murle and Lou Nuer communities. Church-led peace efforts continued, with a conference held in Juba on 2 November in which leaders who had visited communities involved gave feedback on their efforts. Follow-up peace meetings will be held in throughout the month of November. December is considered a key month for Jonglei State in terms of the security and humanitarian situation as youths who have given peace a chance have agreed only to keep the peace until December. In addition, a government-organized civilian disarmament exercise is planned for December.

Assessment confirms food security likely to worsen in 2012

Findings of the Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission (CFSAM) conducted by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization and the UN World Food Programme from 17 October to 4 November provided further confirmation that the food security situation is likely to worsen in 2012. The findings show that next year is likely to be aligned with the worst case scenario predicted by food security and livelihood partners, whereby cereal production could fall 40-60 per cent. A portion of the population's 38 per cent moderately food insecure people are likely to become severely food insecure, thereby requiring increased humanitarian support. This scenario will be attributable to high food prices which are likely to continue in 2012. In another assessment, preliminary findings from the fifth round of Food Security and Monitoring System (FSMS), based on data collected in October, shows a deterioration of food security in Upper Nile and Greater Bahr el Ghazal states, while Warrap State shows a slight improvement of the situation.

III. Returns to South Sudan

Returnee Overview by State*											
State:	Upper Nile	Unity	Warrap	Northern Bahr el Ghazal	Western Bahr el Ghazal	Lakes	Jonglei	Western Equatoria	Central Equatoria	Eastern Equatoria	Total
New Arrivals 2-8 Nov.	78	0	25	0	62	0	39	0	0	0	204
Previous Arrivals (adjustments)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Previous Total	57,355	86,515	32,347	66,170	19,489	17,332	20,029	1,334	37,445	10,304	348,320
Updated Total	57,433	86,515	32,372	66,170	19,551	17,332	20,068	1,334	37,445	10,304	348,524
Type of Returnee											
Government Assisted	25,267	32,080	16,770	21,550	7,623	15,627	16,090	818	23,193	8,865	167,883
Spontaneous	17,016	54,435	6,345	43,229	11,928	1,435	3,948	467	14,252	1,439	154,494
Unspecified	15,150	0	9,257	1,391	0	270	30	49	0	0	26,147

*since 30 October 2010. Contains only verified IOM data unless otherwise noted. Figures are as of 8 November 2011.

Trains carrying over 2,000 returnees arrive in Northern Bahr el Ghazal

The pace of returns to South Sudan remained at a reduced level with just over 200 returnees arriving at final destinations by 8 November. However, this pace is expected to increase in coming weeks and months. On 10 November two IOM-supported trains and one government-supported train that departed Khartoum almost two weeks ago arrived in Northern Bahr el Ghazal with some 2,400 returnees on board. About 2,000 of the group are expected to remain in Northern Bahr el Ghazal and 400 are expected to proceed onward to Wau in Western Bahr el Ghazal. An IOM-supported convoy of barges is also scheduled to depart Kosti on 13-14 November carrying 3,000 returnees, with an additional 3,000 to depart in the coming month. However, partners are concerned that neither governments of South Sudan or Sudan have signed contracts for barges to support the movement of the extra luggage of the returnees from Kosti, despite commitments to do so. If additional barges are not secured, the loading of large amounts of luggage will slow down movements considerably. The cumulative number of South Sudanese who have returned to South Sudan since the end of October 2010 stands close to 350,000 people.

Humanitarian support to people in transit and new arrivals continues

Based on assessed needs, health support was provided on 10 November in Rumaker to returnees en route to Aweil in Northern Bahr el Ghazal. In response to reports of a shortage of clean water, partners also provided water to returnees upon arrival in Aweil for the train destined for Western Bahr el Ghazal. The state government in Northern Bahr el Ghazal has expressed a wish for the newly arriving returnees in Aweil to proceed directly to final destinations and not become stranded at the crowded Apada and Madhuany transit sites. The humanitarian community is providing onward transport to assist this movement, where possible. For returnees who may have to wait longer periods for onward transport, the government is encouraging the use of a site 10km from Aweil. As basic services are not yet established at this site, humanitarian partners are discussing setting up humanitarian support at the location.

Assistance to returnees in other states also continued over the week. Onward transport from Juba and Wau to Yambio in Western Equatoria was provided by IOM from 2-4 November. About 100 returnees received one month of food rations and proceeded to their final destinations in the state. In Unity State, some 400 of 600 returnee families in Bentiu and Rubkona towns have received land titles to plots close to Rubkona town. Movement to the plots and shelter support for vulnerable households will be coordinated jointly between humanitarian actors and the government.

Contact Information:

This report was prepared by the OCHA South Sudan office in collaboration with humanitarian partners. If you have inputs for the next edition, or questions/comments on the current issue, please contact: ochasouthsudan@un.org