

# PROTECTION TRENDS SOUTH SUDAN

October - December 2016



 Rocco Nuri/UNHCR



# PROTECTION OVERVIEW AND TRENDS

Photo: Thousands of internally displaced people gather at Emmanuel Church Compound in Yei, South Sudan, during a high-level mission from Juba in September 2016.

## INTRODUCTION

This is the ninth Protection Trends report prepared by the South Sudan Protection Cluster (PC) in close collaboration with Child Protection, Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV) and Land Mines and Explosive Remnants of War sub-clusters, and other protection actors.<sup>1</sup> The report provides an overview of the protection situation reported and observed in the last quarter of 2016 and includes some information obtained in January 2017 to make this report more current.<sup>2</sup> Information is gathered from partners in regional Protection Cluster meetings and PC actors' missions to field locations. A description of the main conflict displacement areas and specific sections on the threats against children, gender-based violence, and landmines and explosive remnants of war and some identified protection issues that impact on the protection of civilians is also included. Recommendations for the humanitarian community, the UN Mission (UNMISS) and the government of South Sudan are also provided.

## OVERVIEW OF SITUATION

The acceptance of Taban Deng as the legitimate First Vice-President (FVP) now also means that the SPLM-IO, previously recognized as a legitimate political opposition, its members are now characterized as criminals or terrorists, and now outside the political process.<sup>3</sup> The new approach by the government has partly led to the creation of new alliances of various rebel groups in the Equatoria region and in Western Bahr el Gazal with the former FVP Machar which has led to more conflict. There is an increased focus on ending the conflict through addressing it only as a security problem. There is less opportunity for meaningful political dialogue. Conflict is likely to continue and even increase causing people to continue to flee both inside and outside of the country. The political changes have given rise to debate amongst some humanitarians of whether or not the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCSS) signed by both in August 2015 is still valid. At the same time, there has been

an increase of government restrictions to access persons of concern that are perceived to be aligned with the "IO" or residing in IO (aligned with Machar) controlled areas. As people continue to flee to these areas, their access to basic services has deteriorated during this reporting period.<sup>4</sup>

## COMMUNITIES UNDER THREAT AND CONTINUING FORCED DISPLACEMENT

Violent attacks against civilians and community infrastructure by government forces continue to cause internal displacement and people seeking asylum in neighboring countries. Women and children have been most effected subjected to exploitation, abuse, abduction, rape and other forms of gender based violence, perpetrated by actors within and outside their own communities. These human rights violations will continue to cause families to flee and separate and exposed to significant psychosocial harm.

Apart from northern Unity state, the large majority of IDPs are living behind the front lines of where their respective ethnic group controls the territory or in areas where the SPLA does not have a presence. Dinka living in majority areas of other ethnic groups have fled to government controlled areas often with SPLA assistance. The entire Dinka neighborhood of 10,000 in Lomoku has departed from Yei with a few hundred elderly people and families of SPLA forces remaining. According to government sources, Dinka civilians have been forced to leave the Equatoria region for fear of attacks by the local population. As the conflict continues along ethnic lines there will most likely be a larger number of Dinka, Nuer and Shilluk and others moving to areas where their communities or those they are able to live with without fear, are in relative control of the area.

All segments of the population continue to be exposed to protection risks. Women and girls continue to be subjected to gender-based violence, both inside and outside the Protection of Civilian sites (POCs), and uniformed soldiers are often reported to be the perpetrators. Men and boys face high risks of forced recruitment, as well as the

<sup>1</sup> See previous reports at: [www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/south-sudan/protection](http://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/south-sudan/protection)

<sup>2</sup> To provide the most up to date report some information obtained in January is included.

<sup>3</sup> See Small Arms Survey report, December 2016.

<sup>4</sup> Increasingly the government has prevented UNMISS patrols, and humanitarian actors, including ICRC and MSF, to make assessments and provide assistance in IO controlled areas. The villages outside of Yei and Wau are two examples.

threat of being abducted, detained or killed if they are perceived to be of fighting age. Elderly and disabled persons are consistently among the most vulnerable as they are often unable to flee in advance of fighting, and face increased challenges in accessing assistance and services. Without a safe environment, children are particularly vulnerable to abuse, neglect and psychological trauma. With the breakdown of rule of law, there is no accountability and perpetrators of violence act with impunity. Human rights violations, including attacks on civilians are expected to continue.

With the ongoing and expanding conflict, with no visible efforts to hold perpetrators of violence accountable, protection actors are limited in their ability to improve the protection environment in South Sudan. People who have the ability to leave the country continue to do so and it is expected the number of asylum-seekers to neighboring countries will continue to increase in 2017. But many people in their communities of origin or displaced will need support away from the front lines in areas where fighting will continue. Humanitarians are now faced with an environment in which they must be prepared to respond to new emergencies, while simultaneously assisting displaced persons who voluntarily decide to move to areas where they can improve their situation at this time.

The ability to access many of the rural areas by national and international humanitarian actors and UNMISS is challenging and is further impacted by government restrictions. However local communities remain a priority for support where the vast majority of vulnerable people are residing. Supporting the capacity of local NGOs, community based organizations and local leaders will need to be increased as a necessary means to access the large number of communities that provide some protection for people during the ongoing conflict.

### **RESTRICTION ON FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT HINDERING IDPS TO FIND PROTECTION**

Acts that restrict freedom of movement have continued impacting on the ability of civilians to seek international protection, safety, security and access their own resources and humanitarian assistance. Restrictions on movement prevents civilians from fleeing and using displacement as protection.

New arrivals from South Sudan in Uganda continue to report that border points are heavily guarded (on the South Sudanese side). Asylum seekers cross the border through irregular crossing points far away from main roads so as not to be identified at SPLA checkpoints. Recently in Kajo-Keji, people trying to cross to Uganda were turned back by the South Sudanese forces on the border. In Yei, civilians driven into the town following extensive violence in surrounding areas remain feeling trapped without resources and the permission to leave. Targeting of civilians and transport vehicles on the main roads by armed groups has also prevented the movement of people and essential goods. The general insecurity in most of the country has now impacted on all regions, from Northern Bahr al Ghazal to the Equatoria region. With the reduced freedom of movement, people cannot access their livelihoods. Trade through the Equatoria region with Uganda, Kenya and the Democratic Republic of Congo and with routes to Sudan have continued to be diminished, increasing costs of all basic items making them inaccessible to the most of the population.

For people in the POC sites, as a result of the lack of security in their places of origin, and in the immediate surrounding area of the POC,

their lack of freedom of movement continues to impact on congestion in the sites and protection concerns. A prerequisite for improvement of the conditions for the population in these IDP locations is for the government to increase the protective environment outside these sites to enable freedom of movement that contributes to decongestion.<sup>5</sup> From information obtained from focus group discussions with IDPs inside POC sites, an increasing number of IDPs are expressing they would like to leave to a safer location, including seeking asylum outside of the country.<sup>6</sup> After more than three years of people forcibly displaced with their human rights denied, in particular the right to freedom of movement and the dignity to provide for oneself and their family, both men and women IDPs continue to face extreme risks when outside the POC sites in Malakal, Juba and Wau. These risks include arrest, abduction, sexual violence, and for some, targeted and killed. Still, many IDPs have taken the risk to move at this time. However there has been some improvement of freedom of movement. "With the start of the dry season in mid-November and then in December 2016, IDPs movements reported from UN House to various locations inside South Sudan and neighboring countries have been reported. During the period of November-December 2016 UNHCR captured information that 1245 Individuals departed the Juba POC sites. In focus group discussions (FGDs) with various members of the communities, including IDP leaders and participants in the FGDs indicated that about 10% (Approx. 4000-5000 Individuals) of the IDP population residing in the UN house may have left the POC sites during November-December 2016. In order to collect exact information from blocks/Zones UNHCR teams are collecting quantitative data."<sup>7</sup>

At the same time there are new arrivals to the Bentiu POC from continuing conflict in central Unity state and new arrivals in the Juba POC sites from the Equatoria region. However, there are a significant number of people monitored moving out of these sites each week.<sup>8</sup> From October to December 2016, hundreds if not thousands of people started to take the initiative to find ways to move by boat down the Nile river to the IO controlled area of Old and New Fangak in northern Jonglei region and also on to Sudan. Many state they came from the Juba POC sites. The local authorities have registered over 5,600 new arrivals as of mid-December 2016.<sup>9</sup> Starting in November and into December, over one thousand IDPs in Malakal moved from the POC site across the river to Wau Shilluk and onwards with the relaxation of movement restrictions from the SPLA. Over 1,350 people, more than half the POC population in Bor, have requested at the established Protection desk to leave the POC site and are requesting assistance to travel and identification of a safe route to their desired destinations. From a recent joint assessment, the POC site in Melut, with a registered population of 681 IDPs, it is assessed that less than half that number is actually living there now. The reasons for leaving the POC sites vary from fear that the POC site will be attacked again during future conflict, general insecurity in the POC sites (depending on the site), inadequate services, complaints of food quality and quantity and reunification with family members in asylum countries and other locations.

Increasingly, IDPs are making decisions about their future security and access to humanitarian assistance. As the conflict expands with increasing violence, protection has continued to diminish during this reporting period. Freedom of movement from all locations in and outside of POC sites must continue to be strongly advocated for with the government to assist people find protection for themselves and their families.

<sup>5</sup> This emphasizes the government responsibility to provide security to the population.

<sup>6</sup> See DRC Intention Surveys for Melut POC site and Palioch school (October 2016) and MSF survey in Malakal POC (May 2016) where a large number express their intention to leave these locations. Also see UNHCR Focus Group Discussion Report, Juba POCs, December 2016 and Bentiu Protection Cluster Report on new arrivals to Rubkona and POC, December 2016.

<sup>7</sup> See UNHCR Block Survey Report (POC 1&3), 24 January 2017.

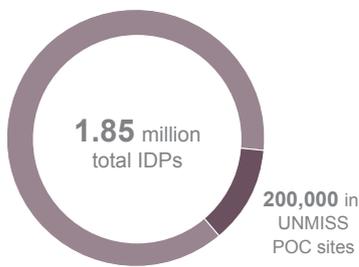
<sup>8</sup> Ibid, December 2016 FGD Juba POCs, also see Bentiu Protection Cluster Report on new arrivals to Rubkona and POC, December 2016.

<sup>9</sup> See Protection Cluster Update and IOM separate report on visit to Old Fangak, 21 December 2016.

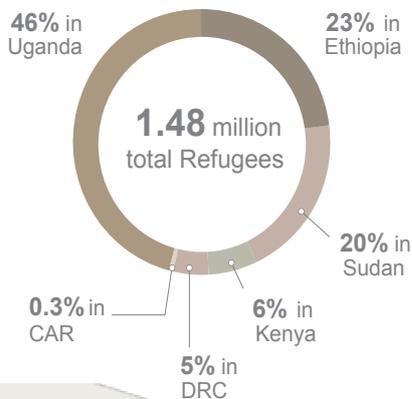


## FORCED DISPLACEMENT

IDPs as of December 2016



South Sudanese Refugees as of December 2016



At present (end January 2017) the estimated number of IDPs is 1.85 million and the number of refugees is now more than 1.48 million. This brings the total of conflict displaced persons to over 3.3 million. The IDP population has increased by 9% over the last year and the number of South Sudanese seeking asylum in surrounding countries has increased by 92% and by 35% since the third quarter of 2016. Given the lack of protection in most areas of the country, people who had been and are presently being forcibly displaced are increasingly moving across the border to Uganda and Ethiopia and more recently a greater number to Kenya and the Sudan seeking security and assistance. With conflicts erupting in new areas near international borders and in areas where there has been sustained insecurity and the populations' resources depleted, people are increasingly choosing to flee out of South Sudan where they can find security and assistance. From monitoring of new arrivals in Uganda, a number have been living as IDPs in Juba and as far away as Bentiu stating they can no longer afford to provide for their families in South Sudan without work or access to their land. Asylum-seekers in Ethiopia and Uganda have complained of being mistreated by local communities around refugee settlements and accessing basic services, particularly water in Uganda. However, daily, on average, over 1,000 South Sudanese are registering in Uganda with a smaller but steady daily number of families seeking asylum in Ethiopia. As of the end of 2016, there were over 640,000 South Sudanese refugees, most from the Equatoria region, in Uganda.<sup>10</sup> Over half of these arrived since July 2016. Over 80 percent of refugees registered in surrounding countries are women and children. Young

men remain to try and protect their property, including crops for their livelihood. There are increasing reports that they have joined, some by force, rebel groups.

Most of the 1.85 million IDPs that have remained within the county are now located near to the areas they were residing before they fled from conflict. However there has been a significant movement of people to areas where they believe they can find protection. After the Juba 2016 conflict when people identified as Nuer again were targeted in Juba, young males have been increasingly identified as supporting the IO and have been detained, abducted and killed. Threats and targeted attacks on ethnic Dinka civilians in the Equatoria region caused most of the Dinka living in the region to flee to Juba with the support of the government forces. According to the RRC in Juba they have registered over 46,000 IDPs mainly from Yei town and the surrounding areas.

### SIGNIFICANT FORCED DISPLACEMENT AREAS ARE DESCRIBED BELOW:

**Equatoria region** - Since July 2016, the conflict has been escalating in the Equatoria region with continued deployment of SPLA and government supported militia forces moving into the area resulting in attacks on civilians and clashes with the local population that have joined the "IO forces". SPLA troops and particularly the associated militia forces have been accused by church leaders of massacres in the region. Commenting on the latest rise in violence in the Yei area, a Bishop publicly said that relations between civilians and the army have reached a low point. According to the Bishop, on 31 October, ten villagers were killed at Kalipapa village located about 38 miles west of the capital Juba. On

<sup>10</sup>At the time of the publication of this report, the first week of February 2017, there are well over 800,000 registered refugees from South Sudan.

12 November another mass killing by troops took place along the Yei-Lasu road, a distance of one and half miles west of Yei town. The victims included youths and some women. According to a survivor, a group of villagers were arrested on their way back from the market to their ancestral village near Goburu when armed men in uniform accused them of being rebels, placed them in a tukul, tied their hands and shot them, then set the tukul on fire.<sup>11</sup> Recently in Kajo-Keji, church leaders have also condemned conflict between government forces and rebels. Incidents of killings have been reported from Kajo-Keji, Magwi, Maridi, Mundari and Lainya over the last few months of 2016.

The estimated number of IDPs in the region remains over 400,000 (Western Equatoria 120,000, Central Equatoria 200,000 [by community assessments, it is estimated there are well over 100,000 IDPs in Juba. This includes the people in POC sites, informal settlement sites and IDPs who have settled elsewhere in the city and suburbs], Eastern Equatoria 100,000). More people in the region have been internally displaced but a greater number have chosen to flee to Uganda and Kenya from the region so the IDP estimate remains about the same as previously reported in October 2016. With the ongoing attacks on civilians by government forces and fighting with people identified as "IO", many IDPs are hiding in their villages or the surrounding areas as the fighting has increased in all regions from Ezo in the West to rural areas of Eastern Equatoria. At present, conflict has the potential to escalate. After the reports of the killing of 7 civilians on 22 January and an attack on a police station in Kajo-Keji town where two people were killed, many IDPs who had been staying in the town and in surrounding villages are fleeing to Uganda.<sup>12</sup>

The displacement and protection situation in the Equatoria region has been caused mostly by the breakdown of the rule of law with sporadic and violent fighting in random locations; indiscriminate killings, arbitrary arrests and detentions and torture of civilians; and retaliatory attacks that after one incident of killing or an ambush, similar or more brutal attacks take place. Since November 2016, the local courts are not functioning, as is the same for most government offices with so many civil servants leaving to Uganda or Juba. Services in remote locations no longer exist and even in Yei town, hospitals and clinics have no essential drugs and people are charged for services they cannot afford. The exorbitant prices of commodities due to scarcity of goods is exacerbated by the impact of livelihoods with the conflict. The conflict causing large scale displacement in the region has not resulted in a corresponding gearing up or shifting of resources and humanitarian actors to the region. Current programmes on protection, livelihood, health and WASH are not enough for the assessed needs of the displaced population which is expected to increase once access to remote villages becomes possible. At the time of this report, thousands of people continue to flee Kajo-Keji town and surrounding villages to Uganda.

**In the Western Bahr el Ghazal;**<sup>13</sup> the estimated total number of IDPs in the region has remained the same since the last PC Trends report at over 80,000, with some people leaving

IDP locations and others entering. As of January 2017 in all collective sites in Wau town there are estimated to be 41,785 individuals. Nearly 75% of the IDP population are in the POC area adjacent to UNMISS (population 29,021 individuals from December head count, a 25-30% increase from July 2016). The POC site is overcrowded but an expansion is expected to be complete by the end of February 2017. Since June 2016, the GOSS has had four high level visits to the POC site to encourage return. The community emphasized improvement of safety and security in their neighborhoods before they could return. From the previous PC Trends report, less incidents of attacks on civilians accessing their homes have been reported.

Most IDPs, staying in collective sites in other parts of Wau town, outside the POC, have chosen to reside in those locations because of their close proximity to their homes and/or employment. This has allowed for IDPs to more easily access their pre-displacement residences and assess the security situation. As a result, more IDPs are choosing to temporarily return to their residences—at the Nazareth site (approximately 1,400 individuals) up to 50% of the IDPs are frequently sleeping in their homes. IDPs at the site reported that night patrols by the joint forces (SSPNS, Wildlife, Prisons, and Fire) have increased security in the area, and now IDPs are spending longer periods outside of the collective sites. SPLA presence in the Town decreased in the last half of December, and SPLA Military Police are increasingly responding to criminal actions carried out by uniformed and non-uniformed individuals. Insecurity remains a serious concerns for IDPs in locations on the outskirts of Wau Town.

Some IDPs are beginning to regularly stay outside of the collective centers. Progress towards more durable solutions has been limited by lack of services, schools closed, lack of markets opened due to insecurity in agricultural areas near town, damaged and destroyed houses without the means to repair them. More effort to support IDPs trying to return and monitoring to understand what prevents other IDPs from doing the same is being planned by the Wau protection actors.

Humanitarian access to the affected population outside of Wau town continued to be restricted by the Government, preventing humanitarian access. However ICRC, IMC and Health-Net have been able to make limited assessments. In January 2017 with support from the Governor, humanitarian actors managed to conduct Interagency Rapid Needs Assessment (IRNA) to Baggari with difficulties, including security searches by both Government and rebel check points. Humanitarians still have not been able to provide food and sufficient health interventions to the rural area that is estimated to host an estimated 40,000 IDPs.

In the **Upper Nile region**, on 11 October 2016 in Liang Boma, armed clashes between government and SPLA IO forces in the southern part of Maban County (Benshawa Boma) caused the death of two civilians and over 10,000 people to flee to Bunj town. 2,897 households/10,595 individuals were profiled and assisted with food and NFIs.

<sup>11</sup> Other reports similar to these, not all confirmed, have been widely reported in the last three months in the media related to Central Equatoria causing fear amongst the population.

<sup>12</sup> From 22nd - 31st January 2017, UNHCR reported 28,553 South Sudanese refugees arriving in Uganda with many still waiting to cross the border.

<sup>13</sup> Information in this section obtained from a recent UNHCR Protection field visit to Wau, January 2017.

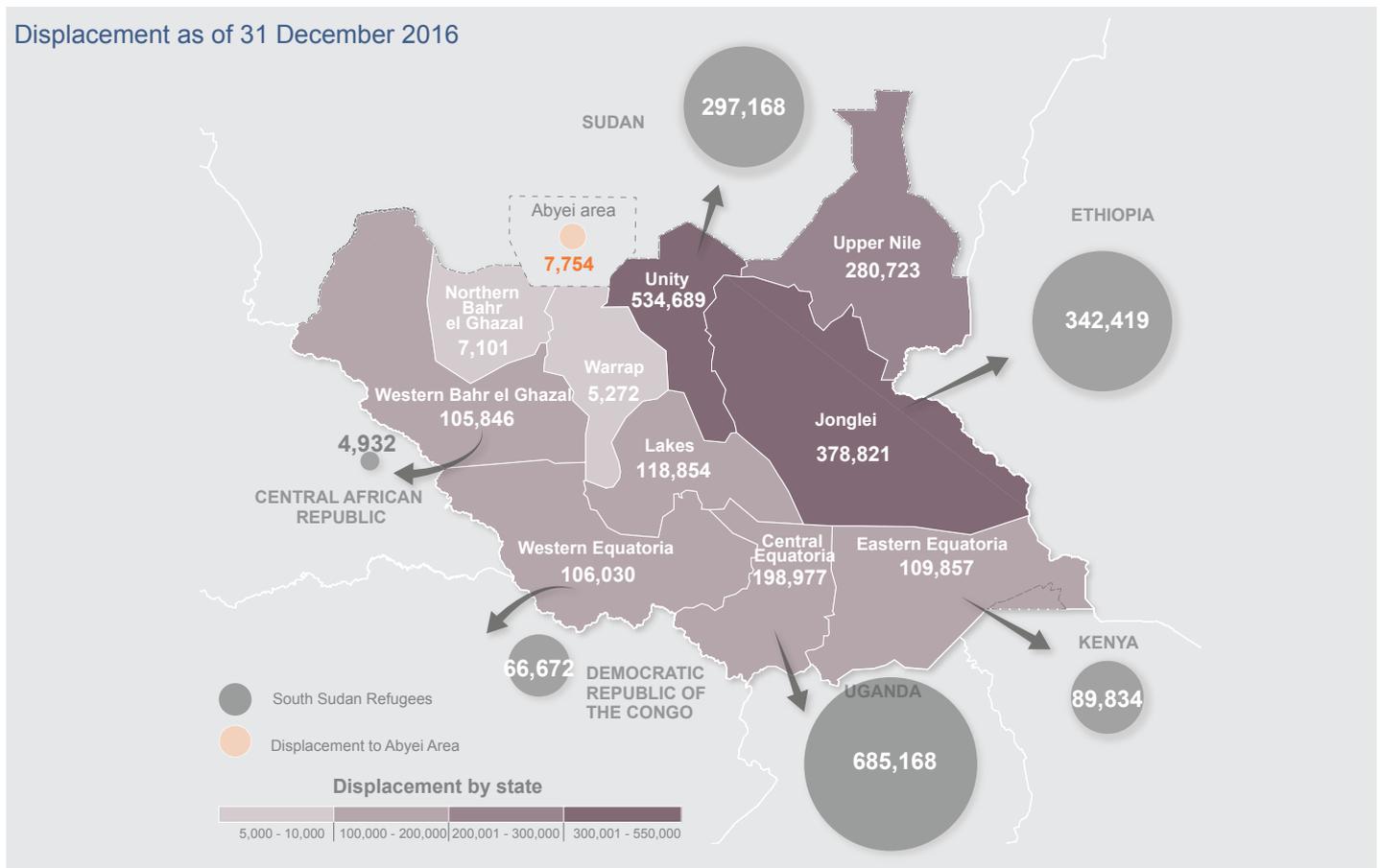
On 15 October, clashes reported between SPLA-N and the host community near the border area with Sudan in Shatta Boma, Maban County. The fighting started when 6 men from Ardeba who went to the market in Shatta town were attacked by unknown gunmen. Eleven civilians were reported killed including 4 women. The IDPs reported that people also fled from surrounding villages due to fear of attacks. In addition to the reported deaths, houses were burned and villages were looted. About 580 households/2,441 individuals were profiled and assisted with food and NFIs.

On 25 December 2016, South Sudanese civilians in North East Maban County were displaced as a result of conflict that erupted between armed members from the refugee and the host community. Four men were killed. This was followed by subsequent shootings in Doro between the same groups of armed persons. Over 20 people were killed including an older woman that made the local communities flee to Hai Istifta and South of Yabus River where they are currently seeking safety. 1,555 households/8,036 individuals of the host community were profiled and assisted with food and NFIs. Consequently MSF had set up a surface water treatment base at the river bank to provide water of sufficient quantity and quality. UNHCR and partners are engaged with the local authorities in a reconciliation process to enable people to return.

During the last few months of 2016 and into 2017, fighting between IO and SPLA has continued in Nasir County. The

conflict has caused IDPs to move into concentration areas along Sobat, Baro and Gilo Rivers near the border with Ethiopia. The IDP population in the area is now estimated at 35,000 - 40,000. IDPs reported to members of an IRNA mission that they experienced attacks by a helicopter gunship and as many as 20 children are missing including four children abducted by cattle herders in the area. Less people are choosing to cross the border and are waiting for the possibility to return to their areas so they can at least access food and protect their cattle. In the areas of cattle camps, Maker, Buri Abiye and Jikmir, that also borders with Ethiopia there are estimated to be an additional 25,000 IDPs. There has been an increase of about 14,000 asylum-seekers registered in Ethiopia from this area since October 2016, bringing the total registered as of end January 2017 to 56,864.<sup>14</sup>

**Malakal town** had been relatively stable during the last few months of 2016. People continue to arrive into Malakal town from areas such as Baliet and Korplus (September - December 2016, over 1000 registered with the RRC). The population is largely ethnic Dinka. The reason for the movement is cited to be insecurity and food scarcity. The government has also repeatedly requested humanitarians to assist IDPs to move to Malakal town from Juba and Melut. There is concern that this movement and occupation of properties will eventually cause more tension with former residents of Malakal who are now displaced in the POC in Malakal town.



<sup>14</sup> Information in this section was mainly provided by UNHCR Maban IDP Protection focal points. This number includes South Sudanese arrived in 2016 and January 2017.

As reported above, there was a significant movement of women and children moving out of the POC across the river to Wau Shilluk, mainly for reasons of family reunification with family members in Wau Shillu and in Khartoum and some seeking asylum in Sudan. In late December 2016, movement tracking in the POC identified persons returning to the site. UNHCR/DRC and partners are conducting further intention surveys to establish triggers for movement in and out of POC site.

Freedom of movement and physical security continues to be a main concern despite some relaxation of movement from the POC site. Women and children continued to face SGBV when venturing out of the POC site from either SPLA (reports of clear identification of their uniform) or armed men in civilian clothes. Nevertheless, this is an accepted risk by the female population. Men risk being arrested, abducted or killed should they venture outside of the POC site. Additionally, while the interaction between the Dinka and Shilluk tribes in the market place appears cordial, fighting has occurred as witnessed in October 2016. Incidents of women in the POC site being subjected to insults, stone throwing and harassment have occurred. The inter-tribal relationship is fragile and tensions flair rapidly.

At the time of this report there has been increasing conflict in the region between SPLA and IO forces causing the population in Wau Shilluk to flee northward. The area of fighting includes Bukeny, Ditang, Ogod and Wau Shilluk on the West Bank and further north in Renk. The presence of SPLA in Wau Shilluk has made the population of approximately 20,000 to flee further in-land and north towards Lul, Padit and Pathang and further to Kodok.<sup>15</sup>

**Jonglei** - A noted trend has been the arrival of IDPs from different areas such as the Equatoria region and the POC sites in Juba. Between mid-November and December, some 5,000-6,000 individuals were reported to have arrived from Leer in Unity and Juba POCs to Old Fangak. The reasons for leaving are the lack of services and that they fear further insecurity and wanted to reunite with family members. They also described the relative stability in Jonglei state in areas that are clearly divided between the government and IO-controlled areas, with Duk as the frontline. The arrival of more vulnerable people has strained and will further burden the already insufficient services. There is concern that conflict will erupt as a result of the presidential order to dispatch newly appointed governors to the IO controlled areas.

In October, a large movement of people was reported from Jonglei to the Upper Nile and on to Ethiopia through Akobo. Some 3,700 households were reported to have been registered as refugees at the time, while people moving from Akobo to Tierguol, Ethiopia continue to be reported. The continued movement of people from Pajut to Yuai was reported between August and October. Some 11,000 were reported to have been displaced in Padiek.

In November, the RRC in Bor reported that 3,376 individuals

(674 HHs, mainly Dinka), mostly from Yei, arrived in Bor, following the conflict in Yei that started in July 2016. Most of the displaced are scattered into different areas in Bor town being assisted with temporary support from their relatives and neighbors in the host communities. A vulnerability assessment conducted by the Protection Cluster in December revealed that some 507 households (2,714 individuals) fall under the Persons with Specific Needs (PSN) categories; however the number is projected to increase with new arrivals. The latest figure from the RRC at the end of December is 900 households (5,335 individuals). In Twic East an NGO identified over 900 people returning mainly from Minkaman to the area from October – November 2016.

In December, some 1,021 households (5,524 individuals) were reported to have been displaced, following cattle raids in Jalle Payam, Bor County and to the other payams in Bor County. Some 19 people were killed, three girls were abducted, and 12,500 cattle were taken. Cattle raids and child abduction despite a peace agreement concluded on 4 December between Jonglei and Boma State, as well as other criminal activity continues to persist. Similar fear from cattle raiding and child abduction is reported in Twic East by NGOs monitoring and responding in this area. Criminality/impunity related to addressing peaceful co-existence between tribes will require more resources for livelihoods, awareness-raising/ education and increasing the rule of law.<sup>16</sup>

**Unity**<sup>17</sup> – In June 2016, the Bentiu POC population size had reduced to approximately 85,000 IDPs. There has been a steady increase of the population which now amounts to about 120,000 according to a recent IOM headcount. About 70% of this population has arrived from Southern Unity, mainly from Leer, Mayendit and Koch Counties. Towards the end of the year and the beginning of the dry season, there was reported an increase of activity by armed groups both government and IO affiliated with Machar (IO 1) and IO affiliated with Deng (IO 2). Forced recruitment, cases of SGBV, destruction of property such as burning of houses, farms and raiding of cattle has been reported in and outside of the Bentiu POC.

Much of this military activity is related to the new FVP affiliated IO 2 formed after the Juba conflict. This triggered new displacement of civilians mainly in Leer where some have settled next to the Leer UNMISS Temporary Operating Base (estimated 1840 individuals as of end December 2016 according to UNMISS –GHANBATT figures).<sup>18</sup> After conflict for a few months in central-southern Unity particularly around Thornyor and Adok, there are now estimated to be well over 10,000 IDPs in the area hiding in the swamps and islands of the area avoiding conflict. The UNMISS assessment is that the area around the TOB is volatile and further conflict is expected.<sup>19</sup> ICRC has registered over 11,000 households in the area and is providing basic food assistance to these vulnerable communities. MSF is also providing mobile health care to many communities in areas of central Unity that host IDPs. Non-Violent Peace Force has made two missions to Leer since late December and CCCM and PC members from Bentiu have also made recent visits to the area.<sup>20</sup> The PC

<sup>15</sup> Information related to Malakal and surrounding areas obtained from Protection Cluster focal person in Malakal.

<sup>16</sup> Information obtained in this section was largely obtained by the Protection Cluster focal persons, Bor field office, January 2017.

<sup>17</sup> Information obtained in this section was largely obtained by the Protection Cluster focal person, Bentiu field office, January 2017.

<sup>18</sup> NP reported 1,350 in their January 2017 mission report.

<sup>19</sup> According to FORCE and RRP, reported in two the JOC meetings, both in December and January. RRP is drafting a position of UNMISS plans for the TOB.

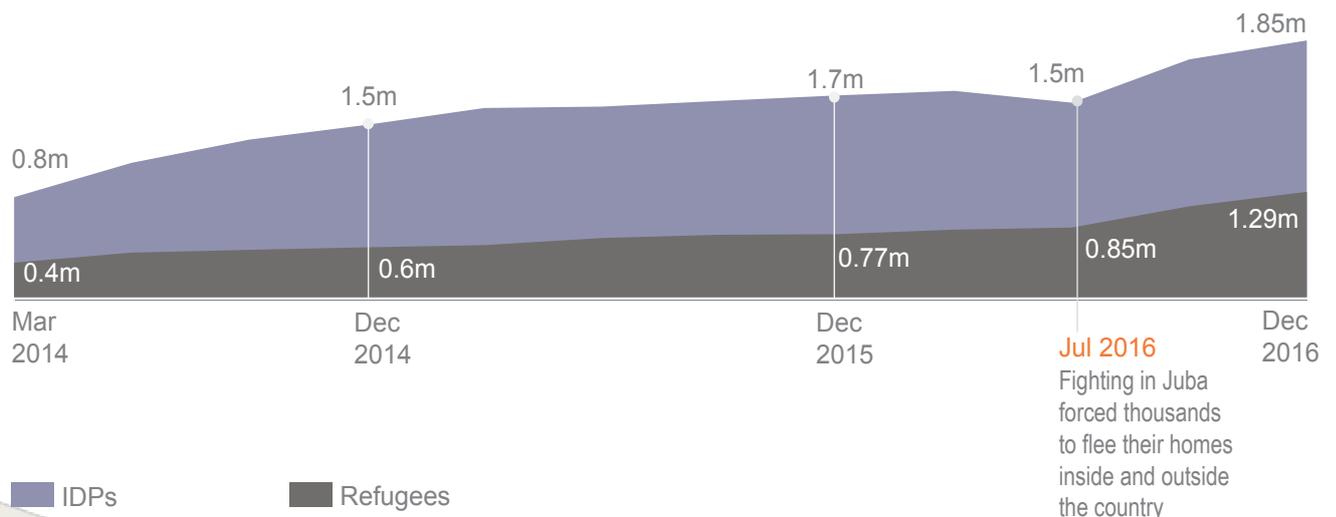
<sup>20</sup> See Nonviolent Peace Force mission reports to Leer (December 2016 and 7-16 January 2017). Also see Bentiu CCCM report Leer TPA, 7-10 January 2017.

is concerned that the continuation of the assistance would provide a reason for people to remain and potentially put them at greater risk than if they moved to areas identified as safer such as the Bentiu POC or villages where ICRC and MSF is accessing. Vulnerable IDPs should be provided alternative locations to move to where they can access assistance supported by humanitarians in locations that can also provide community support.<sup>21</sup>

The newly formed IO 2 moved to the north causing fear and some displacement in Guit County. Many civilians (11,000 approx) opted to settle around Nimni and Cadet reportedly because of access to food distributions by WFP. Tensions in Mayom related to the splitting of the county triggered unrest also leading to displacement of approximately 200 civilians.

The creation of new States in the Lakes region along the southern border with Unity resulted in conflict between three communities' of Dinka, Beli and Bongo. Immediately after the decree of a new state was made public, the conflict of Bhargel between Gok and Beli communities started. In August 2016 fighting erupted and continues which led to displacement of 1865 residents of Bhargel.

Displacement Trends Mar2014 - Dec2016 (in million)



<sup>21</sup> See PC report, Lack of Protection in the LEER TOB Site, 21 December 2017.

# FAMILY TRACING AND REUNIFICATION

## Separated Children



## Missing Children



## Unaccompanied Children



At the end of December 2016, separated children comprised just under 60.21% of the total caseload, followed by children registered as missing and unaccompanied children, at 25.14% and 14.65% respectively. The aforementioned resource limitations, necessitating a move away from reunifying all separated and unaccompanied children with their families, to allocation of resources to unaccompanied children and separated children with high protection concerns only, can be expected to contribute to a shift in the caseload over 2017, where separated and missing children will become a greater proportion of the overall caseload.

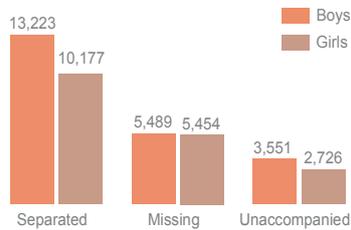
inaccessibility issues but are anticipated to create some shifts in 2017.

Beyond contextual issues that contribute to spikes and falls in data, trends from 2016 speak to the significant impact of the changed funding landscape, accessibility to areas controlled by SPLM-IO, increased incidences of conflict and displacements, absence of partners in particular areas and turnover of staffs and capacity of Family Tracing and Reunification partners to operate and reach children in South Sudan with critical services.

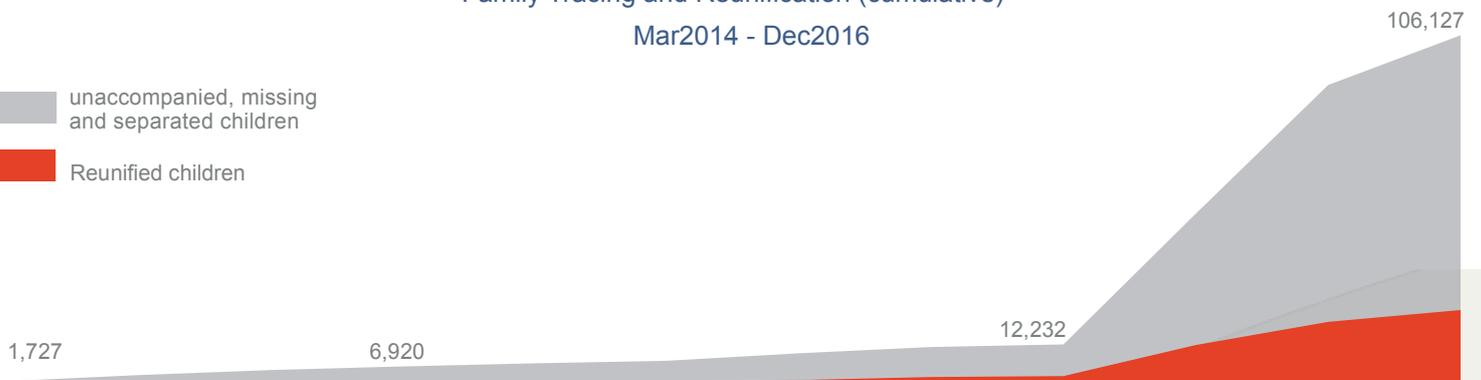
1,195 children have been reunified with their families during 2016 compared to 2,734 children reunified in 2015, building on 4,572 reunifications achieved in the preceding years and representing 26.14% of all reunifications through the lifespan of the response. 25.61% of reunifications in 2016 were done in January alone.

State caseloads reflect a number of differentials relating to partner's presence, concentration of populations, accessibility and the availability of funding. The overwhelming majority of the total FTR caseload is concentrated across Jonglei, Upper Nile and Unity States, comprising the conflict-affected Greater Upper Nile Region of South Sudan. Increased incidences of conflict and displacement in Greater Bahr el Ghazal and the Greater Equatoria Region aren't yet fully reflected in FTR caseload due to the lack of partners in these areas and

## Unaccompanied, Missing and Separated Children by Gender as of December 2016



## Family Tracing and Reunification (cumulative) Mar2014 - Dec2016



Source: Family Tracing and Reunification database.



## GRAVE VIOLATIONS OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

### Attacks on & military use of schools



**1,439** affected children

### Recruitment and use of children



**373** affected children

### Abduction



**123** affected children

### Sexual violence



**47** affected children

### Killing



**12** affected children

### Injuring



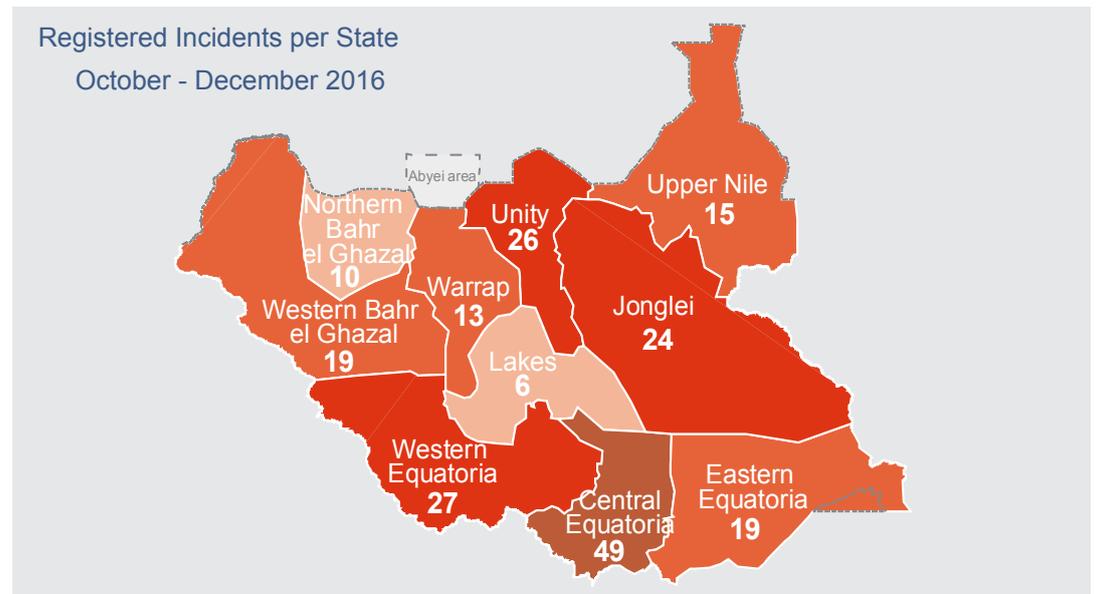
**11** affected children

During the fourth quarter of 2016, 208 incidents affecting 3,049 children were reported through the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM). The UN verified 182 incidents affecting 2,005 children. The number of reported incidents dropped from the previous quarter when 342 incidents, affecting 7,859 children, were documented. The drop in numbers is likely related to access constraints to monitor violations in the Greater Equatoria region, which has been destabilized by conflict since July 2016. Most of the incidents, 46 per cent, were documented in the Greater Equatoria region. The Greater Upper Nile region accounted for 31 per cent of documented incidents and the Greater Bahr el Ghazal region for 23 per cent.

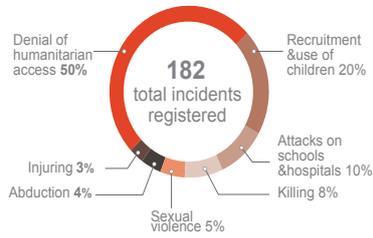
As in previous quarters of 2016, denial of

humanitarian access and recruitment and use of children were the most reported violations accounting for 50 per cent and 20 per cent of documented incidents, respectively. Incidents of recruitment and use were documented throughout the country, including in Eastern Equatoria State, where no incidents had been recorded in previous reporting periods of 2016.

Fewer incidents of recruitment and use were documented during the fourth quarter than in previous 2016 quarters; however, during the last quarter, the UN documented a new trend in which boys were recruited and transported from their home areas to various parts of country for redeployment or to take part in military trainings. Children were also observed by UN monitors acting as bodyguards and



Registered Incidents:  
October - December 2016



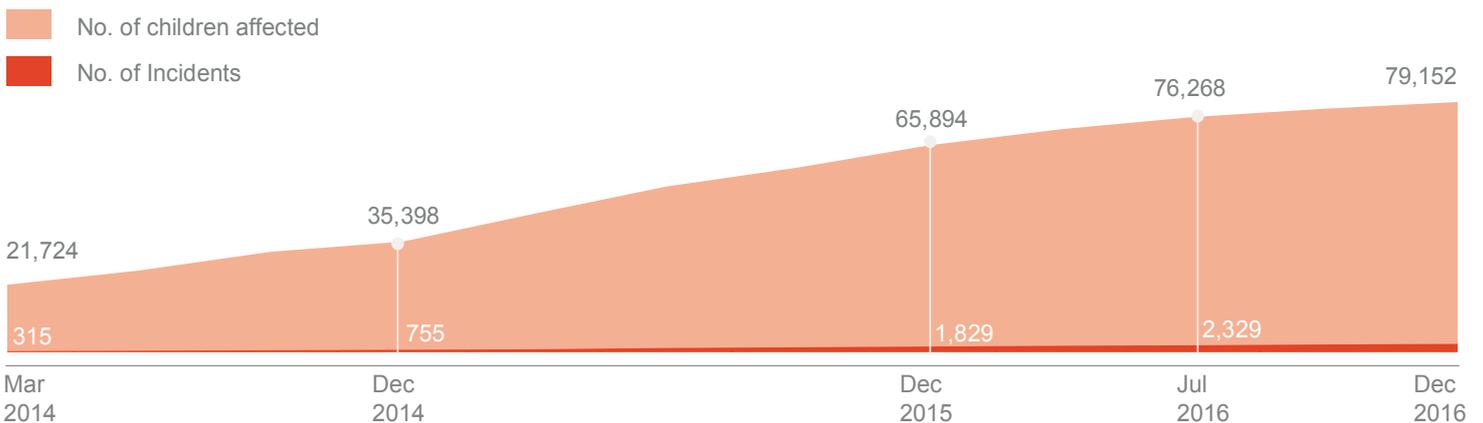
carrying other support roles.

The UN also documented an increase in the number of attacks on hospitals and health facilities by armed forces and armed groups. Most of the incidents have been documented in the Equatorias. At the end of the year, the UN verified the military use of 55 schools throughout the country.

On 26 October 2016, a second release of children was carried out in Pibor, Jonglei, in which 120 children associated with the SSDA Cobra Faction and 25 associated with the SPLA-IO were released. This was the second release by the SSDA Cobra Faction; the first took place in 2015 when 1,755 children associated with the armed group were released to the DDR Commission and reintegrated into their communities. All of the released children are benefiting from reintegration services, which includes family tracing and reunification, psychosocial support, education, vocational training and livelihood opportunities. In line with best practices and the Paris Principles,

the released children will be assisted alongside other vulnerable children in their communities of return.

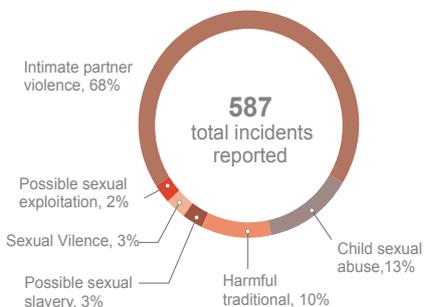
Incidents of Grave Child Rights Violations (cumulative)  
Mar2014 - Dec2016





## GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

### GBV Reported Cases: Case Context October - December 2016



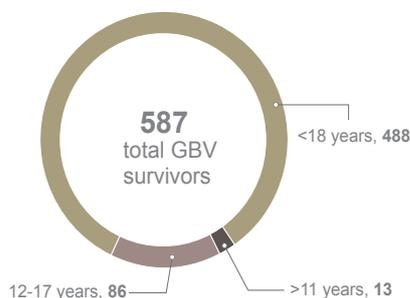
Gender-based violence (GBV) remains one of the most serious and prevalent protection threats to women and children in South Sudan. From October to December 2016, the Gender-Based Violence Information Management System (GBV-IMS), used by humanitarian service providers and managed by UNFPA, recorded 575 incidents of GBV, with 96 of those incidents against children.<sup>1</sup> As in previous quarters, they include rapes, other forms of sexual violence, abductions and possible sexual slavery, forced and early marriage and harmful traditional practices. The highest number of reports involved incidents of intimate partner violence. Incidents of all the forms of GBV occurred both inside and outside of POC sites.

of GBV, including sexual violence. Community leaders, police, security guards and UN/ NGO staff were other alleged perpetrators of different types of gender-based violence.

The reported incidents represent only the tip of the iceberg of GBV prevalence, due to the stigma and violence often associated with reporting acts of GBV and survivors' limited access to reporting mechanisms and services.

There is a serious gap in services to reach women and girls outside of POCs, particularly in Southern Unity and the Equatoria region. For example, the GBV – IMS data cannot capture reports of service and GBV incidents in most areas of conflict and displacement in Eastern Equatoria, areas outside of Juba in Central Equatoria and in many parts of Western Equatoria. Throughout the Equatoria region, a number of hospitals and health clinics have shut down, were looted or attacked or health personnel have fled or no longer fully function due to lack of public funds. While humanitarians search for ways to access these populations and provide services in precarious security situations, there is a need for accountability mechanisms that hold perpetrators accountable for GBV as well as violations of international law when protected spaces such as hospitals and health clinics are attacked.

### GBV Reported Cases: Age of the Survivor October - December 2016



Women and girls continued to report facing the brunt of this violence. The threat and use of sexual violence in particular encroached on every aspect of their lives and their human rights. During this quarter, there were frequently reported attacks of women and girls, particularly when they left POC sites to gather firewood or food, in Malakal, Juba, Wau, Bentiu and in new areas of displacement. They also faced attacks as they traveled roads and rivers to find refuge in another country, a POC site, a collective displacement site, or a more stable community that is less affected by the conflict. In assessments conducted in refugee areas in Uganda in September and in Juba displacement sites in December 2016, women reported fleeing the country and sites in Juba because of threats of sexual violence.<sup>2</sup>

Gender-based violence in POC sites remains a serious concern. A safety audit conducted in the Bentiu POC in November 2016 revealed women face GBV when traveling from food distribution sites, in shower and latrine areas,

All parties to conflict allegedly committed acts

<sup>1</sup>The data for December 2016 is not complete yet due to interruptions in service and evacuations because of insecurity for several service providers during December. The numbers are likely to be higher when and if all the data gathering organisations are able to provide data.

<sup>2</sup> See UNHCR, "Assessment on Departures from PoC Sites in Juba – December 2016", p.3, and CARE, "Inequality and Injustice: the deteriorating situation for women and girls in South Sudan's war, A progressive Gender Analysis 2013-2016," p.11.

GBV Reported Cases:  
Types of Incidents  
October - December 2016

Physical assault

 297

Rape

 107

Psychological abuse

 81

Denial of resources

 49

Sexual violence

 32

Forced marriage

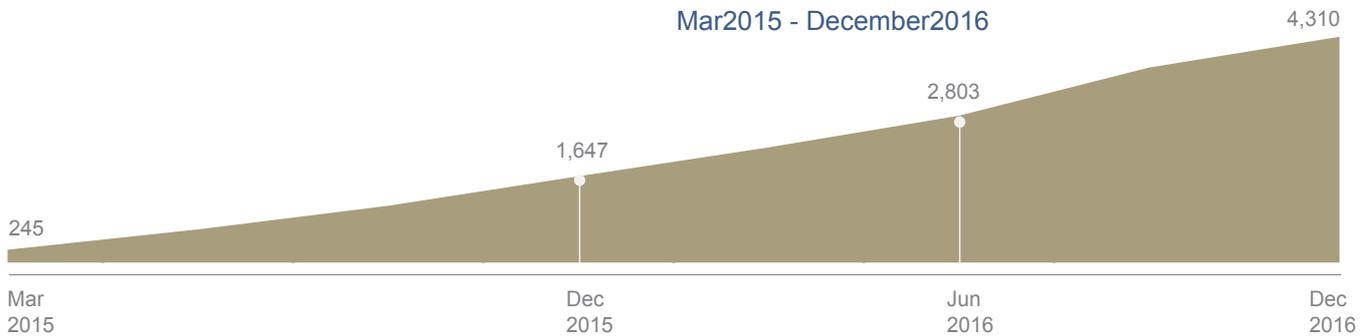
 21

on the road to one of the main health clinics at night. Armed youths and criminal gangs inside the POC are another significant threat. The crowded shelter conditions that lack privacy was cited as a key factor in domestic violence.<sup>3</sup>

Overall, reports of GBV during 2016 increased by a staggering 61 % compared to 2015.

Number of GBV Reported Cases (cumulative)

Mar2015 - December2016



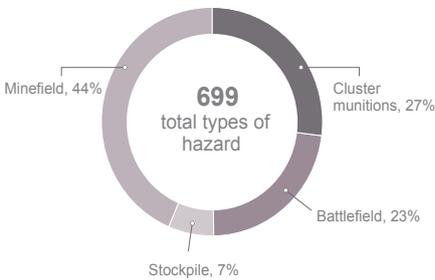
<sup>34</sup>Coordinated GBV and Protection Safety Audit<sup>3</sup>, 3 to 11 November 2016. Conducted jointly by UNMISS, IRC, DRC, NP and UNHCR.

\*The GBVIMS was rolled out in South Sudan in 2014. It currently includes 15 member organizations. GBVIMS data that is shared is only from reported cases in areas where the data-gathering organizations are providing services, and is in no way representative of the total incidence or prevalence of GBV in South Sudan. These statistical trends are generated exclusively by GBV service providers who use the GBVIMS for data collection in the implementation of GBV response activities in a limited number of locations across South Sudan and with the consent of survivors.



# LANDMINES AND UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE

## Types of Hazards as of December 2016



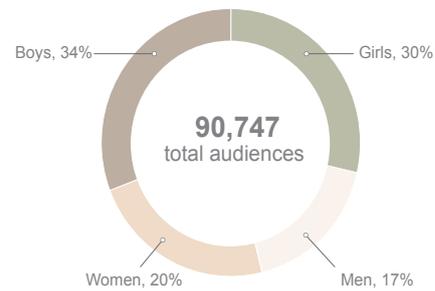
Over 90 million square kilometers of land are contaminated by landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) in South Sudan, a legacy of past and recent conflict. As a result of such a legacy, nearly three quarters of the South Sudanese population live in close proximity to these explosive hazards. While the map below highlights the known hazards recorded in the Mine Action database, the full extent of contamination across all of South Sudan is not known due to issues of access and insecurity which has hindered a comprehensive survey.

known HAs recorded, 225 were cleared. While the rainy season ended during this quarter, and is typically the commencement of dry season mobilization, the security situation did not permit the remobilization of Mine Action teams in entirety as planned. This delay in deployment has resulted in reduced overall productivity as well as number of hazards reported. However, there was no significant fluctuation over the numbers of hazardous areas closed in comparison with the previous year's reporting period. The real impact of access issues can be primarily seen on the vertical graph which indicates number of hazards found.

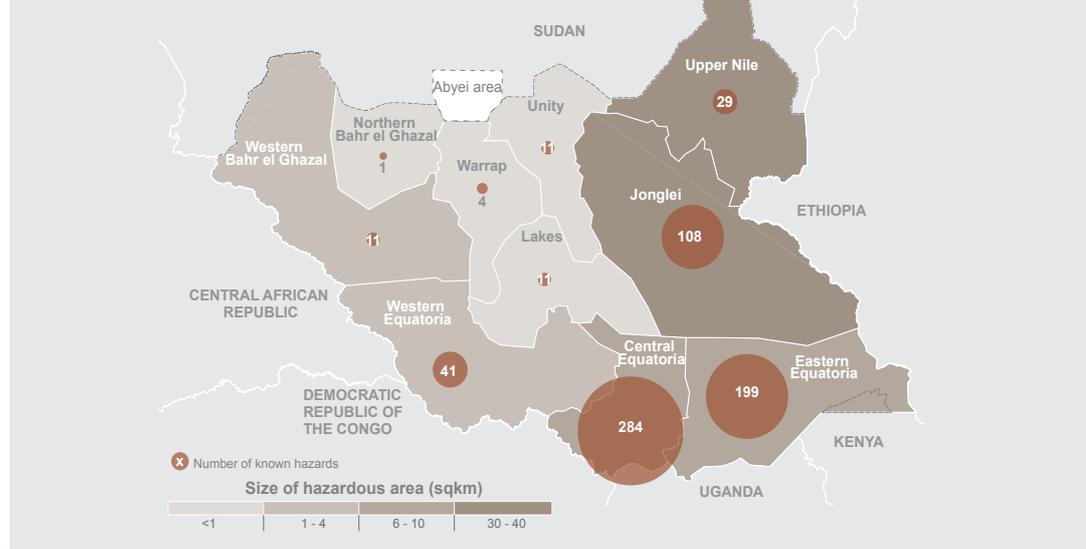
From October to December, 19 Mine Action teams were deployed to conduct surveys, clearance, and risk education to support protection of civilians, create conditions for the delivery of humanitarian assistance, and support protection monitoring and reporting. A total of 215 hazardous areas (HAs) were newly reported during this period; of the 669

With fewer teams operational this has meant fewer embedded Community Liaison Teams, who are the main interlocutors with with communities in gathering information and locations of unreported HAs. Despite the

## MRE\* Audiences: October - December 2016



## Known Hazardous Areas and Number of Known Hazards as of December 2016



Source: Information Management System of Mine Action (IMSMA).  
 \* MRE: Mine Risk Education, UXO: Unexploded Ordnance.

Devices Destroyed as of December 2016

Unexploded Ordnance (UXO)

 **902,360**

Anti Personnel mine

 **31,253**

Anti Tank mine

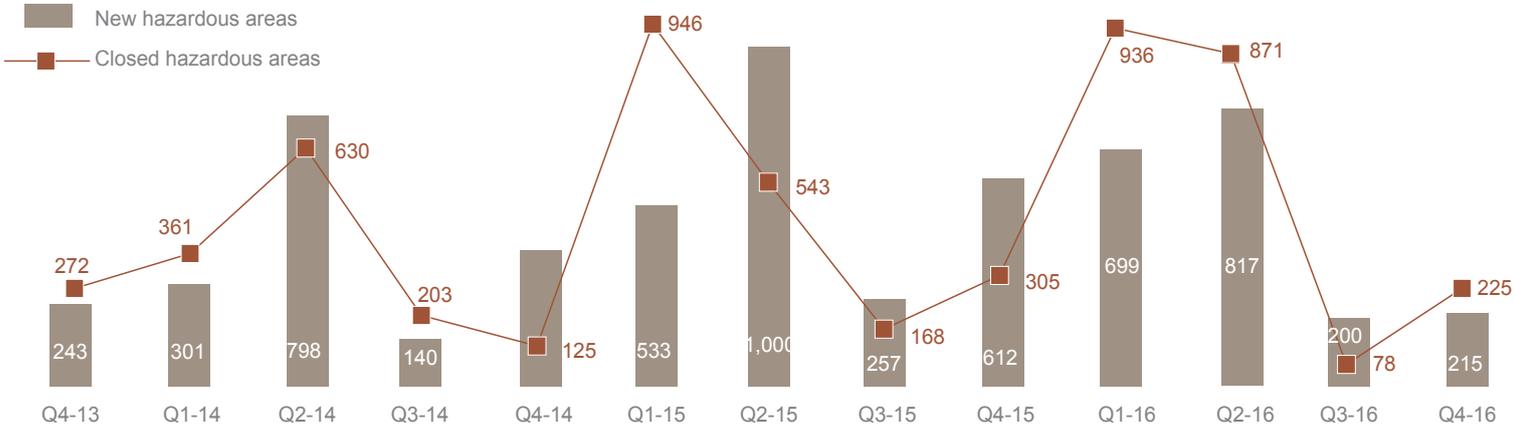
 **5,735**

reduced operational space throughout South Sudan, UNMAS was able to continue to fulfil urgent survey and clearance in order to support the South Sudanese population. For example the village of Lalob, north of Bentiu, was found to be heavily contaminated by explosive remnants of war. A water source and its vicinity were prioritized for clearance. Additionally in Bentiu, a UXO was removed from a WFP aerial drop zone to enable the facilitation of food distribution.

However insecurity has at times impeded ongoing work, such as in Pochalla, in which a populated area was found to be heavily contaminated. The affected residents and local school were temporarily relocated in order to enable clearance activities, but due to intermittent conflict, the clearance has had to be halted to ensure the safety of deminers. As previously reported, the ethnicity of deminers and the composition of teams has remained an issue, even in areas where they have been operating in the past.

During this reporting period, Risk Education (RE) increased its focus on scrap metal trading following an incident in which children from the UN protection of civilians site in Juba were found with a hazardous item and reported they had been told it could be exchanged for food.

Hazardous Areas - Dec2013 - Dec2016





## RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE PROTECTION OF IDPS

### To the Transitional Government of National Unity of South Sudan and all parties to the conflict:

1. As stated in previous and current Protection Updates and Security Council Resolutions, South Sudan's Transitional Government of National Unity bears the primary responsibility to protect its civilian population from human rights violations, including targeted killings, gender-based violence, abductions, torture and destruction and looting of property. Hold actors accountable that commit human rights violations against civilians.
2. The Protection Cluster welcomes the opportunity to work with the authorities responsible for humanitarian affairs to fulfill their responsibilities to support IDPs according to the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and human rights and international humanitarian law.
3. The Protection Cluster emphasizes that all returns and relocations must be voluntary, informed and in safety and dignity. This applies to all population movements, regardless of whether they are spontaneous, facilitated by the government or by humanitarian actors.
4. The Transitional Government of National Unity should respect displaced persons' right to freedom of movement and freedom to choose his or her residence, and urges political leaders to refrain from pressuring/forcing displaced persons to settle in specific areas for reasons associated with political and/or ethnic affiliation.
5. In order to effectively assist people in need, humanitarians must be able to work freely, neutrally, impartially and independently. All assistance should be needs-based conducted in line with existing humanitarian principles and guidelines.
6. The Government responsibility to protect all its citizens is emphasized. The recent findings of the Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide highlighted displacement as a result of ethnic conflict. The Protection Cluster expresses its desire to assist the government to prevent violence, overcome ethnic division and support peaceful co-existence.<sup>1</sup>

### To UNMISS:

1. With increasing conflict and insecurity along major transport

roads, it is recommended that UNMISS regularly patrol on these access routes so people can move more freely and seek protection where they choose.

2. To ensure the civilian character of the UNMISS POC sites, and to enable freedom of movement for especially women, perimeter and internal security of UNMISS POC sites is essential, regular searches to identify and separate/isolate armed individuals and security measures to protect women and girls as they move in high risk areas against Gender Based Violence are recommended to be increased, based on consultation and coordination with IDPs, especially women and girls.
3. Increased sharing of information with humanitarians is recommended. Regular meetings including the UNMISS Relief, Re-integration and Protection Section, and other relevant civilian components with the Protection Cluster and other humanitarian actors can facilitate analysis and agreement on how to improve protection for civilians.

### To the HCT, humanitarians and donors:

1. Conflict is expected to continue in the Equatoria region and the displaced population is expected to increase once access to remote villages becomes possible. The Protection Cluster emphasizes the need for UNMISS, UN agencies and INGOs to establish presence to protect the most vulnerable population that remains in the region.
2. IDPs are finding solutions, even if temporary, in different locations, some moving from POC sites and from other locations, to areas where there are vulnerable communities affected by the conflict, including those hosting large numbers of IDPs. Efforts to increase services through capacity building of local authorities, community based organizations, and strengthening GBV services, coordination and referral mechanisms to address GBV and Child Protection concerns should be prioritized to increase protection in these vulnerable communities.
3. Efforts to support the capacity of local NGOs, community based organizations and local leaders will need to be increased as a necessary means to access the large number of communities that provide protection for people during the ongoing conflict.

<sup>1</sup> See Special Advisor's Statements, 17 November 2016 and 7 February 2017, <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/SS/ReportJuba16Jan2017.pdf>