

**COI QUERY**

Country of Origin	South Sudan
Main subject	Security situation Information on the security situation in South Sudan, namely in the states of Upper Nile (Maiwut and Jikou), Western Equatoria, Central Equatoria (Yei and Lobonok), (including Pibor), Western Bahr el-Ghazal, Warrap and Unity.
Question(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Introduction2. Developments after the 2018 peace agreement3. Main armed actors4. Control of the territory5. Impact of violence on civilians6. Security situation in selected states<ol style="list-style-type: none">6.1 Upper Nile state (Maiwut and Jikou)6.2 Western Equatoria state6.3 Central Equatoria state (Yei and Lobonok)6.4 Lakes state6.5 Jonglei state (including Pibor)6.6 Western Bahr el-Ghazal state6.7 Warrap state6.8 Unity state
Date of completion	24 April 2020
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The information provided in this response has been researched, evaluated and processed with utmost care within a limited time frame. All sources used are referenced. A quality review has been performed in line with the above mentioned methodology. This document does not claim to be exhaustive neither conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to international protection. If a certain event, person or organisation is not mentioned in the report, this does not mean that the event has not taken place or that the person or organisation does not exist. Terminology used should not be regarded as indicative of a particular legal position.

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The target audience is caseworkers, COI researchers, policy makers, and decision making authorities. The answer was finalised on 24 April 2020. Any event taking place after this date is not included in this answer.

COI QUERY RESPONSE



Map 1: United Nations, South Sudan, Map No. 4450, Rev. 1, October 2011, [url](#)

1. Introduction

South Sudan became an independent country in 2011, after some 99 percent of voters in the south chosen to break away from northern Sudan.¹ In 2013, civil war erupted in the country, originating as a dispute between the president Salva Kiir and the vice president Riek Machar, whom Kiir accused of planning a coup.² At the time, International Crisis Group described Machar as a 'leader of a loose coalition of disgruntled groups across the country'.³ The fighting later evolved into an ethnic conflict⁴,

¹ BBC News, South Sudan profile - Timeline, 6 August 2018, [url](#); France 24, Over 99 percent of South Sudanese vote 'yes' to independence, 30 January 2011, [url](#)

² Al Jazeera, South Sudanese rebels 'approve' peace deal with government, 31 August 2018, [url](#); BBC News, South Sudan: What is the fighting about?, 10 May 2014, [url](#); USDOS, 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: South Sudan, 11 March 2020, [url](#), p. 1

³ International Crisis Group, *Déjà Vu: Preventing Another Collapse in South Sudan*, 4 November 2019, [url](#), p. 3

⁴ South Sudan is an ethnically diverse country with some 70 different ethnic groups. Dinka and Nuer are the biggest ones, with estimated proportion of some 36 and 16 per cent, respectively. See: MRG, South Sudan, July 2018, [url](#). They are further



with the Dinka supporting Kiir and the Nuer supporting Machar⁵, consequently causing a humanitarian crisis.⁶

The parties signed a peace agreement in 2015 that was respected until July 2016, when new fighting started in Juba. In September 2018, the largest warring parties signed a new peace agreement.⁷ Despite this, fighting continued in some parts of the country.⁸ It is estimated that the conflict caused two million people to flee the country, while another two million remained internally displaced.⁹ The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine released a study in 2018 that estimated that some 382 900 deaths occurred in relation to conflict in South Sudan between December 2013 and April 2018. The states of Jonglei, Unity and the Eastern, Central and Western Equatoria were reported as witnessing the highest numbers of deaths.¹⁰

2. Developments after the 2018 peace agreement¹¹

In August 2015, Kiir and Machar signed a peace agreement, and in April 2016, a unity government was formed. The agreement collapsed in July 2016 after a fighting in Juba broke out and Machar eventually fled the country.¹² On 12 September 2018, Kiir und Machar signed a new peace agreement.¹³ Not all opposition leaders signed the agreement, arguing that it did not address the actual issues causing the conflict.¹⁴ The agreement covered various subjects including the establishment of the unity government, permanent ceasefire and humanitarian assistance. According to the agreement, the unity government should rule for 36 months, and 60 days before its end, democratic elections should take place. The agreement establishes a position of a single president – Kiir; first vice president – Machar; and four other vice presidents.¹⁵ Following the agreement, all armed parties in South Sudan were supposed to be disarmed or unified into integrated military and police forces.¹⁶ In August 2019, it was reported that a new unified armed forces should have 83 000 fighters.¹⁷

divided into the Aweil Dinka, the Rek Dinka, the Dunjol Dinka, and the Leek Nuer, Lak Nuer, and Lou Nuer. See: Delmet, C., South Sudan: The State and Traditional Nilotic Societies. Livestock, Sacrifices, Justice, and Exchanges, February 2013, Cairn.Info, [url](#), p. 3

⁵ CRS, South Sudan, 28 December 2018, [url](#), p. 1; Guardian (The), More than 300 dead as South Sudan capital is rocked by violence, 11 July 2016, [url](#); OSAC, South Sudan 2019 Crime & Safety Report, 3 August 2019, [url](#)

⁶ CRS, South Sudan, 28 December 2018, [url](#), p. 1; New York Times, 383,000: Estimated Death Toll in South Sudan's War, 26 September 2018, [url](#)

⁷ USDOS, 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: South Sudan, 11 March 2020, [url](#), p. 1

⁸ USDOS, 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: South Sudan, 11 March 2020, [url](#), p. 1

⁹ MSF, Life inside or outside a displacement camp, 20 June 2019, [url](#)

¹⁰ London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (The), Estimates of crisis-attributable mortality in South Sudan, December 2013-April 2018, September 2018, [url](#), p. 19

¹¹ Gurtong, Revitalised Agreement On The Resolution Of The Conflict In The Republic Of South Sudan (R-ARCSS), 19 September 2018, [url](#)

¹² CRS, South Sudan, 28 December 2018, [url](#), p. 1

¹³ Al Jazeera, South Sudan president signs peace deal with rebel leader, 12 September 2018, [url](#); Reuters, South Sudan's president, rebel leader sign peace deal, 12 September 2018, [url](#)

¹⁴ CRS, South Sudan, 28 December 2018, [url](#), p. 2; Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2019 - South Sudan, 4 February 2019, [url](#)

¹⁵ ACCORD, Reviving peace in South Sudan through the Revitalised Peace Agreement, 11 February 2019, [url](#)

¹⁶ CIA World Factbook, South Sudan, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁷ International Crisis Group, Déjà Vu: Preventing Another Collapse in South Sudan, 4 November 2019, [url](#), p. 5

According to the agreement, a new unity government was to be established in May 2019, which was later postponed for six months until November 2019¹⁸ and later again for 100 days.¹⁹ The unresolved issues included the final number of states and their borders²⁰ and personal safety of Machar in Juba.²¹

On 22 February 2020, a unity government was formed with a plan to hold elections within three years.²² President Kiir agreed to install Machar as his deputy and took responsibility for his security in Juba.²³ The number of states in the country was reduced to the original ten²⁴, while three special administrative areas were created.²⁵

3. Main armed actors

Governmental forces

- **The South Sudanese People's Defense Forces (SSPDF):** forces loyal to president Kiir.²⁶ Before September 2018, they were known as the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA)²⁷. The SSPDF are responsible for providing security throughout the country, under the Ministry of Defense and Veterans' Affairs.²⁸ The SSPDF consists of ground force, air force, air defense forces, and presidential guard.²⁹ The Head of the armed forces is the president.³⁰ Global Firepower estimates the number of active military personnel in South Sudan at 197 500.³¹ For detailed information on the organization of the SSPDF, see the January 2020 UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) report.³²
- **The Internal Security Bureau of the National Security Service (NSS):** operates under the Ministry of National Security. It can conduct arrests in relation to the national security, however, according to the US Department of State (USDOS), it 'operates far beyond its legal authority'.³³ According to the 2011 Transitional Constitution, NSS's role is to 'focus on

¹⁸ CRS, South Sudan, 28 December 2018, [url](#), p. 2; International Crisis Group, Déjà Vu: Preventing Another Collapse in South Sudan, 4 November 2019, [url](#), p. 4

¹⁹ HRW, World Report 2020 - South Sudan, 14 January 2020, [url](#)

²⁰ HRW, World Report 2020 - South Sudan, 14 January 2020, [url](#)

²¹ Africanews, Riek Machar visits South Sudan to save peace deal, n.d., [url](#); PD Online, Machar, Kiir must not obstruct Juba peace process, 28 October 2019, [url](#)

²² Al Jazeera, South Sudan's rival leaders form coalition government, 22 February 2020, [url](#); France 24, South Sudan's rivals form unity government in bid to end war, 22 February 2020, [url](#); UN News, UN chief welcomes South Sudan's Unity government, lauds parties for 'significant achievement', 22 February 2020, [url](#)

²³ New Humanitarian (The), In the news: South Sudan's new coalition government – third time lucky?, 21 February 2020, [url](#)

²⁴ Previously, number of states in South Sudan was extended from ten to 28 in October 2015 by Kir, and later in January 2017 to 32. See: UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), para. 18

²⁵ Foreign Policy, Diplomats Fear a Collapse of South Sudan's Latest Peace Deal, 5 March 2020, [url](#); UN, Deadlock broken, South Sudan on road to 'sustainable peace,' but international support still key, 5 March 2020, [url](#)

²⁶ Rulac, Non-international armed conflict in South Sudan, 22 January 2020, [url](#)

²⁷ UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), p. 53

²⁸ USDOS, 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: South Sudan, 11 March 2020, [url](#), p. 1

²⁹ CIA World Factbook, South Sudan, n.d., [url](#); UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), p. 55

³⁰ South Sudan, The Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan, 2011, available at: [url](#), Art. 153 (1)

³¹ Global Firepower, South Sudan Military Strength (2020), n.d., [url](#)

³² UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), pp. 53-56

³³ USDOS, 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: South Sudan, 11 March 2020, [url](#), p. 1

information gathering, analysis and advice to the relevant authorities'.³⁴ Sources reported on numerous violations committed by the NSS during the conflict.³⁵

- **The South Sudan National Police Service (SSNPS):** authority responsible for law enforcement in South Sudan.³⁶ According to the transitional constitution, the police shall 'prevent, combat and investigate crime, maintain law and public order, protect the people and their properties'.³⁷ The SSNPS consists of some 40 000 officers and it is reportedly underpaid and involved in corruption and other crimes.³⁸

Main armed opposition groups³⁹

- **The Sudan People's Liberation Movement-Army in Opposition (SPLM-IO)⁴⁰:** consists of defectors from South Sudanese forces loyal to Machar⁴¹; it was described by the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) as the 'largest rebellion' in the country.⁴² Since 2015, many ethnic groups other than the Nuer have joined the group, keeping a significant level of autonomy.⁴³ It was reported that when Machar returned to Juba in April 2016, his forces consisted of 1 300 soldiers and 'some police'.⁴⁴
- **National Salvation Front (NAS):** consists of defectors from South Sudanese armed forces.⁴⁵ It is headed by former military official Thomas Cirillo. The NAS did not sign the 2018 peace agreement.⁴⁶ Active in Equatoria, reportedly involved in clashes with both SPLA/SSPDF and SPLMAO⁴⁷, and seen as the second largest opposition group in the conflict.⁴⁸ Together with the South Sudan National Front, they continued to fight the governmental forces in Equatoria since November 2018. NAS and SPLMAO controlled parts of the Central Equatoria, while other parts of the state remained under the government's control.⁴⁹ In November 2019, it was assessed as the only group that was not a party to the 2018 peace agreement and was capable to launch organized violence.⁵⁰

³⁴ South Sudan, The Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan, 2011, available at: [url](#), Art. 159 (3)

³⁵ AI, Amnesty International Urges South Sudan to Address National Security Service Violations and Crimes, 12 March 2019, [url](#), p. 1; HRW, South Sudan: Reform Abusive Security Agency, 19 February 2020, [url](#)

³⁶ USDOS, 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: South Sudan, 11 March 2020, [url](#), p. 1

³⁷ South Sudan, The Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan, 2011, available at: [url](#), Art. 155 (2)(a)

³⁸ OSAC, South Sudan 2019 Crime & Safety Report, 3 August 2019, [url](#)

³⁹ Main parties of the 2018 peace agreement from the opposition were the SPLM-Army in Opposition, the SPLM-Former Detainees and the South Sudanese Opposition Alliance. Other signatories were the Umbrella Coalition of Political Parties, the National Alliance of Political Parties, the United Sudan African Party, the United Democratic Salvation Front, the United Democratic Party and the African National Congress. See: ACCORD, Reviving peace in South Sudan through the Revitalised Peace Agreement, 11 February 2019, [url](#)

⁴⁰ In this query response referred to as SPLA-IO as well, according to the original source.

⁴¹ Rulac, Non-international armed conflict in South Sudan, 22 January 2020, [url](#)

⁴² ACLED, Last Man Standing: An Analysis of South Sudan's Elongated Peace Process, 8 November 2019, [url](#)

⁴³ International Crisis Group, Salvaging South Sudan's Fragile Peace Deal, 13 March 2019, [url](#)

⁴⁴ BBC News, South Sudan: Clashes erupt in Juba hours after UN plea, 11 July 2016, [url](#)

⁴⁵ International Crisis Group, Salvaging South Sudan's Fragile Peace Deal, 13 March 2019, [url](#)

⁴⁶ UNOCHA, 2020 South Sudan Humanitarian Needs Overview, 20 November 2019, [url](#), p. 8

⁴⁷ ACLED, Last Man Standing: An Analysis of South Sudan's Elongated Peace Process, 8 November 2019, [url](#); Rulac, Non-international armed conflict in South Sudan, 22 January 2020, [url](#)

⁴⁸ International Crisis Group, Salvaging South Sudan's Fragile Peace Deal, 13 March 2019, [url](#)

⁴⁹ UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), pp. 7-8

⁵⁰ ACLED, Last Man Standing: An Analysis of South Sudan's Elongated Peace Process, 8 November 2019, [url](#)

- **The SPLM-Leaders-Former Detainees (SPLM-FD):** consists of politicians and security officers imprisoned at the outbreak of the civil war.⁵¹ Released in 2014, as a group, they did not hold unified views, according to International Crisis Group. Some of them wanted to place South Sudan under the UN trusteeship, whereas others accepted positions in the unity government.⁵² Current information on size of their troops could not be found in the consulted and used sources.
- **South Sudan Opposition Alliance (SSOA):** an umbrella of smaller opposition groups acting independently from Machar, formed first in 2016 after the failure of the first peace agreement, according to the International Crisis Group.⁵³ In 2018, the SSOA consisted of 10 groups and had 'limited capacities', according to the Institute for Security Studies (ISS). The same source found that the members of the group had 'little in common beyond their opposition to the government'.⁵⁴ International Crisis Group estimated that it had some 1 000 troops in the country in March 2019.⁵⁵
- **South Sudan Liberation Movement (SSLM):** Led by commander Matthew Puljang, it conducted protection of the oil fields in the Unity state after the start of the civil war. In 2014, it was 'technically integrated' into the SPLA, while Puljang managed to maintain an independent command on his troops.⁵⁶ In April 2019, it was described as a predominantly Bul Nuer force consisting of some 2 000 fighters active in Mayom County, with alliance to the government forces.⁵⁷ In 2019, it was indicated that it was transformed into presidential guards.⁵⁸

International organisations

- **The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)**⁵⁹: operates in the country since 2011, charged with 'consolidating peace and security and helping establish conditions for the successful economic and political development of South Sudan'.⁶⁰ Its mandate was later extended to include monitoring of human rights and protection of civilians⁶¹ and it will expire on 15 March 2021⁶². In February 2020, UNMISS civilian personnel counted 2 676 members, the UNMISS police 1 888 members and the military 14 911 members.⁶³
- **United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA):** operates in the disputed Abyei region along the border with Sudan since 2011, charged with 'ensuring security, protecting civilians, strengthening the capacity of the Abyei Police Service, de-mining,

⁵¹ International Crisis Group, Salvaging South Sudan's Fragile Peace Deal, 13 March 2019, [url](#)

⁵² International Crisis Group, South Sudan: Rearranging the Chessboard, 20 December 2016, [url](#)

⁵³ International Crisis Group, Salvaging South Sudan's Fragile Peace Deal, 13 March 2019, [url](#)

⁵⁴ ISS, Compound fractures, Political formations, armed groups and regional mediation in South Sudan, December 2018, [url](#), p. 13-14

⁵⁵ International Crisis Group, Salvaging South Sudan's Fragile Peace Deal, 13 March 2019, [url](#)

⁵⁶ ISS, Compound fractures, Political formations, armed groups and regional mediation in South Sudan, December 2018, [url](#), p. 11

⁵⁷ UNSC, Letter dated 9 April 2019 from the Panel of Experts on South Sudan addressed to the President of the Security Council, 9 April 2019, [url](#), p. 51

⁵⁸ UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), p. 55

⁵⁹ The UNMISS mandate has been prolonged until 15 March 2021. See: [url](#)

⁶⁰ CIA World Factbook, South Sudan, n.d., [url](#)

⁶¹ United Nations Peacekeeping, UNMISS Fact sheet, n.d., [url](#)

⁶² United Nations Peacekeeping, UNMISS Mission Fact sheet, 21 January 2020, [url](#)

⁶³ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General, 26 February 2020, [url](#), para. 80

monitoring/verifying the redeployment of armed forces from the area, and facilitating the flow of humanitarian aid'. In October 2019, it consisted of some 4 400 members.⁶⁴

4. Control of the territory

In December 2018, i.e. three months after the revitalized peace agreement was signed⁶⁵, the ISS reported that the government forces had presence 'throughout the country except remaining opposition strongholds in Akobo and Southern Liech', while the SPLMAO had presence 'throughout rural parts of Greater Upper Nile, Greater Equatoria (Yei River, Gbudwe, Maridi, Amadi, Kapoeta and Imatong) and Greater Bahr-elGhazal (Wau and Lol)'. The same source stated that the NAS operated in Kapoeta, Imatong, Yei River and the SSLM in Northern Liech.⁶⁶

Areas previously held by the opposition include, for example, Maiwut and Ulang in the Upper Nile State, Fangak in northern Jonglei⁶⁷, parts of Equatoria⁶⁸ and villages in Mayendit and Leer.⁶⁹

In March 2020, a month after a new unity government consisting of Kiir and five opposition leaders was formed, it was reportedly not yet decided who will govern the areas of Pibor, Ruweng and Abyei, and the states of Upper Nile, Jonglei and Unity, all of them rich in oil.⁷⁰

For information on local armed groups operating in various states across South Sudan, see the respective sections in this query response.

For estimated territorial deployments of state and non-state actors in South Sudan in December 2019, see UNHRC maps.⁷¹

5. Impact of violence on civilians

Since the conflict started in December 2013, more than 4 million people have fled their homes, with 2.1 million fleeing to neighbouring countries. An estimated 7 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance.⁷²

In 2019, following the September 2018 peace agreement, sources reported that the level of violence in South Sudan declined.⁷³ While International Crisis Group reported that security situation had 'much improved'⁷⁴, sources reported that sporadic instances of violence took place throughout the year.⁷⁵

⁶⁴ CIA World Factbook, South Sudan, n.d., [url](#)

⁶⁵ Reuters, South Sudan's president, rebel leader sign peace deal, 12 September 2018, [url](#)

⁶⁶ ISS, Compound fractures, Political formations, armed groups and regional mediation in South Sudan, December 2018, [url](#), p. 8

⁶⁷ UNOCHA, 2020 South Sudan Humanitarian Needs Overview, 20 November 2019, [url](#), p. 15

⁶⁸ UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), pp. 7-8

⁶⁹ OHCHR, UN demands justice for civilians, 10 July 2018, [url](#)

⁷⁰ Conversation (The), South Sudan: root causes of ongoing conflict remain untouched, 22 March 2020, [url](#)

⁷¹ UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), pp. 57-58

⁷² HRW, World Report 2020 - South Sudan, 14 January 2020, [url](#)

⁷³ HRW, World Report 2020 - South Sudan, 14 January 2020, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Déjà Vu: Preventing Another Collapse in South Sudan, 4 November 2019, [url](#), p. 1; UN, Drop in Violence Reveals 'Glimmer' of Possibilities for Peace, Secretary-General's Special Representative for South Sudan Tells Security Council, 25 June 2019, [url](#)

⁷⁴ International Crisis Group, Déjà Vu: Preventing Another Collapse in South Sudan, 4 November 2019, [url](#), p. 3

⁷⁵ HRW, World Report 2020 - South Sudan, 14 January 2020, [url](#); OCHR, Conflict-related violations and abuses in Central Equatoria, September 2018—April 2019, 3 July 2019, [url](#), para. 21; OSAC, South Sudan 2019 Crime & Safety Report, 3 August 2019, [url](#)

Describing situation in South Sudan in 2019, the Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) reported that clashes between different ethnic communities, caused by a variety of reasons including cattle raiding and abductions of child brides, were common in the country, mostly in Jonglei, Lakes, and Unity states. Cases of 'limited fighting' between the governmental and opposition forces were reported in the country, in the regions of Greater Equatoria (Yei River state), Upper Nile (Bentiu), and Greater Bahr El Ghazal (Wau), according to the source.⁷⁶

Describing the period of 29 May 2019 - 27 August 2019, UNMISS found that '[d]riving factors behind the violence remain complex and varied, comprising boundary disputes, intercommunal tensions and criminal interests.' The source recorded 115 'incidents that had a negative impact on the human rights and protection situation' that caused death of 182 civilians while 135 were injured.⁷⁷ In the period of 28 August 2019 - 30 November 2019, UNMISS documented 133 civilians killed and 119 injured⁷⁸. In the same period, the source documented forced recruitment of civilians in the Unity State, clashes in Central Equatoria and violence against civilians in Maiwut, Upper Nile.⁷⁹ In the period of 1 December 2019 - 15 February 2020, UNMISS documented 449 civilian casualties as a result of 156 'incidents that had a negative impact on the human rights and protection situation'. Of these incidents, majority was attributed to the 'community-based militias and armed elements' (63), the SSPDF (39) and SPLM-IO (19). Majority of civilian victims were attributed to 'community-based militias and armed elements' (182 deaths and 185 injuries).⁸⁰

Humanitarian situation and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

In December 2018, the Congressional Research Service (CRS) described the humanitarian situation in South Sudan as 'dire', adding that the conflict affected farming and trade.⁸¹ South Sudan was described as the worst country for humanitarian workers in the world,⁸² with over 110 aid workers killed in 2018.⁸³ Out of seven million people in need of humanitarian assistance in 2019, more than a half is in need of food assistance.⁸⁴ In February 2020 it was reported that some 40 000 people in South Sudan are in 'famine conditions'.⁸⁵

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) listed 'the civil war that began in 2013, intercommunal violence, and recurrent natural hazards' as the main reasons behind internal displacement in the country. The same source recorded 1 869 000 IDPs in South Sudan at the end of 2018.⁸⁶ In the first half of 2019, conflict caused 135 000 new displacements in the country.⁸⁷ In 2019, some 180 000 people were living in the UN protection sites⁸⁸ located in Juba, in Bor, Bentiu, Malakal

⁷⁶ OSAC, South Sudan 2019 Crime & Safety Report, 3 August 2019, [url](#)

⁷⁷ UNMISS, Report of the Secretary-General: Situation in South Sudan, 10 September 2019, [url](#), para. 22, 58

⁷⁸ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General, 11 December 2019, [url](#)

⁷⁹ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General, 26 February 2020, [url](#), paras. 56-58

⁸⁰ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General, 26 February 2020, [url](#), para. 54

⁸¹ CRS, South Sudan, 28 December 2018, [url](#), p. 2

⁸² Humanitarian Outcomes, Aid Worker Security Report 2019—Updated, June 2019, [url](#), p. 5

⁸³ New York Times, 383,000: Estimated Death Toll in South Sudan's War, 26 September 2018, [url](#)

⁸⁴ UNOCHA, South Sudan Situation Report, 27 March 2020, 27 March 2020, [url](#), p. 1; USAID (US Agency for International Development), South Sudan Crisis Fact Sheet #4 Fiscal Year (FY) 2020, 10 February 2020, [url](#), p. 1

⁸⁵ Al Jazeera, South Sudan's rival leaders form coalition government, 22 February 2020, [url](#); France 24, South Sudan's rivals form unity government in bid to end war, 22 February 2020, [url](#)

⁸⁶ IDMC, Assessing the severity of displacement, February 2020, [url](#), p. 53

⁸⁷ IDMC, Mid-year figures 2019, 12 September 2019, [url](#), p. 4

⁸⁸ MSF, Life inside or outside a displacement camp, 20 June 2019, [url](#)

and in Wau.⁸⁹ In March 2020, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) reported on 1.47 million IDPs in the country.⁹⁰ Since February 2020, thousands have fled violence in the Jonglei State.⁹¹

According to the USDOS, '[t]he government promoted the return and resettlement of IDPs but did not provide safe environments and often denied humanitarian NGOs or international organizations access to IDPs'.⁹² In June 2019, South Sudan acceded to the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention).⁹³ The same year, South Sudan adopted the Protection and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons Act. The act aims to 'establish a legal framework for preventing arbitrary displacement, provide protection and assistance as well as achieving durable solutions for internally displaced persons and displacement affected communities in South Sudan'.⁹⁴

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) described the living conditions in the UN sites as 'dismal with extremely limited access to clean water, latrines, food and adequate shelter'.⁹⁵ Similarly, the UN Security Council (UNSC) noted that IDPs face 'harsh' living conditions because of lack of food and other items.⁹⁶ UNOCHA reported on living in overcrowded conditions and difficulties to access basic services. Additional problems for the IDPs include absence of identity and land registration documents.⁹⁷

Between September 2018 and February 2020, 11 780 persons returned to their areas of habitual residence in the 'humanitarian-supported IDP returns', as reported by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).⁹⁸

On 31 March 2020, UNHCR reported on 2 252 556 refugees from South Sudan, mostly in Uganda, Sudan and Ethiopia.⁹⁹ Between November 2017 and March 2020, the same source recorded 279 880 refugee returnees.¹⁰⁰

For a general overview of the humanitarian impacts of the protracted crisis in South Sudan see also OCHA's Humanitarian Needs Overview – South Sudan 2020.¹⁰¹

6. Security situation in selected states

In all states presented in this COI query answer, the lists of incidents presented are merely indicative and do not claim to be exhaustive or complete.

⁸⁹ UNMISS, Report of the Secretary-General: Situation in South Sudan, 10 September 2019, [url](#), para. 47

⁹⁰ UNOCHA, South Sudan Situation Report, 27 March 2020, 27 March 2020, [url](#), p. 1

⁹¹ New Humanitarian (The), Thousands flee clashes in South Sudan, 17 March 2020, [url](#); UNOCHA, South Sudan Situation Report, 27 March 2020, 27 March 2020, [url](#), p. 1

⁹² USDOS, 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: South Sudan, 11 March 2020, [url](#), p. 21

⁹³ UNHCR, UNHCR welcomes South Sudan's accession to international convention to protect internally displaced, 14 June 2019, [url](#)

⁹⁴ South Sudan, Protection and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons Act of 2019, 2019, available at: [url](#), art.3

⁹⁵ MSF, Huge numbers of wounded as violence continues in Jonglei South Sudan, 17 March 2020, [url](#)

⁹⁶ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General, 26 February 2020, [url](#), para. 35

⁹⁷ UNOCHA, 2020 South Sudan Humanitarian Needs Overview, 20 November 2019, [url](#), p. 19

⁹⁸ UNHCR, South Sudan; Humanitarian-Supported IDP Returns; As of 29 February 2020, 29 February 2020, [url](#)

⁹⁹ UNHCR, Regional overview of the South Sudanese refugee population, 31 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁰ UNHCR, South Sudan; Overview of spontaneous refugee returns (as of March 2020), March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰¹ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020 South Sudan, November 2019, [url](#)

In the states of Upper Nile, Western Equatoria and Central Equatoria, the incidents presented are divided into two categories: battles and violence against civilians, which is further divided into sub-categories depending on type of an incident.

The reference period for incidents in this COI Query answer is 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.

6.1 Upper Nile state (Maiwut and Jikou)¹⁰²

Actors

The main actors involved in military operations and armed clashes in the Upper Nile state are the following:

- Governmental forces, including the SSPDF and SSNPS.
- Opposition groups, including SPLM-IO and SSOA.¹⁰³

For further details on these actors, please see general [Main armed actors](#).

Additionally, at regional level are active:

- The SSPDF - Petroleum Protection Force: this section of the SSPDF has been established by the Government of Sudan to secure oil fields and pipelines from criminal activities¹⁰⁴,
- SPLM-IO, Splinter Faction, led by Major General Ochan Puot, commanding the Cie-Waw section of the Eastern Jikany Nuer militia¹⁰⁵,
- SPLM-N-Agar, Sudan People's Liberation Movement (North) faction led by Malik Agar faction¹⁰⁶,
- Eastern Jikany Nuer Ethnic Militia: militia or community defence forces of the Eastern Jikany Nuer sub-group of the Nuer ethnic group¹⁰⁷,
- Maban Defence Force: communal militia of the Maban County¹⁰⁸,
- Unidentified Communal Militias¹⁰⁹,
- Unidentified Armed Group(s).¹¹⁰

List of incidents

In the reference period, as reported by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) '[t]he intra-Nuer conflict in Maiwut erupted after South Sudan People's Defence Forces aligned under Major General Ochan Puot seized an SPLA-IO supply barge, triggering a series of offensives around Jikou and the Sobat river in December and January'.¹¹¹

¹⁰² For the map of the Upper Nile state, see: UN OCHA, Map of Upper Nile State, December 2016, [url](#)

¹⁰³ ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁴ Gulf Times, Qatar 'agrees' to look into South Sudan hydrocarbon sector: Gatkuoth, 25 March 2019, [url](#)

¹⁰⁵ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 11 December 2019, [url](#), p. 5

¹⁰⁶ Dabanga, SPLM-North El Hilu: 'Agar faction does not control any territory in Sudan, 25 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁷ ICRC, Casebook, South Sudan, The Nuer "White Armies", n.d., [url](#)

¹⁰⁸ African Arguments, Ethnic militias and the shrinking state: South Sudan's dangerous path, 21 August 2014, [url](#)

¹⁰⁹ ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁰ ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

¹¹¹ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 26 February 2020, [url](#), p. 5

Against this backdrop, the UN Human Rights Committee (HRC) in its last report stated that '[f]ragmentation of armed actors in Greater Upper Nile [...] also contributed to ongoing violence and human rights violations, including conflict-related sexual violence'.¹¹²

Based on ACLED data, a data set compiled from media reported incidents, more than 20 incidents have been reported in the Upper Nile region during the reference period, resulting in over 70 casualties.¹¹³ Either one or more of the following sources reported on these incidents: Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism in South Sudan (CTSAMM), Eye Radio (South Sudan), Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC), Radio Miraya, Radio Tamazuj, Sudan Tribune, UNMISS, UNSC.¹¹⁴ These incidents can be grouped as follows:

- a. Over 15 battles (11 of which intra SPLM-IO clashes)
- b. Over 10 episodes of violence against civilians
- c. 1 (reportedly) explosion/remote violence¹¹⁵

Battles

In the period here under investigation the main theatre of dispute in the Upper Nile region has been the Maiwut county (and to a lesser extent the Nassir county), along with the towns of Jikou and Maiwut, at the border with Ethiopia's Gambella. Two factions of the SPLM-IO, one regular, one re-aligned with the government, have clashed during the course of the year in several locations in the area, and for the control of the said towns of Jikou and Maiwut. The SPLM-IO splinter group now realigned with the government is commanded by Major General Ochan leading a youth armed group, the Cie-Waw section of the Eastern Jikany Nuer militia.¹¹⁶

During the same period the SSPDF clashed on various occasions with different actors in various locations:

- In Obay, Panyikang county, where on 15 April 2019 SSPDF clashed with armed pastoralists allegedly from Sudan.¹¹⁷
- Guffa and Keweji, where on 16-17 July 2019 SSPDF Petroleum Protection Force clashed with SPLM-IO rebels, and the two reciprocally abducted some personnel from each side.¹¹⁸
- In the area of Dung Cam (Renk country), 15 km from the Sudanese border, where, on 20 November 2019, SSPDF clashed with Sudanese armed men in military uniform.¹¹⁹
- Jikou, where the SSPDF's offensive against the SPLA-IO continued throughout December 2019.¹²⁰

Violence Against Civilians

¹¹² UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), p. 8

¹¹³ ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁴ ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁵ ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁶ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 26 February 2020, [url](#), p. 4; Radio Tamazuj, SPLA-IO's top general defects to government, 22 September 2019, [url](#)

¹¹⁷ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 14 June 2019, [url](#), p. 5

¹¹⁸ CTSAMVM, as quoted by ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁹ Eye Radio, Armed Sudanese clash with SSPDF near Renk, 23 November 2019, [url](#)

¹²⁰ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 26 February 2020, [url](#), p. 5

In the reference period, in the Upper Nile regional state, civilians have been victims of attacks of various nature, including murdering, looting and sexual violence, resulting also in widespread displacement. The reported events can be grouped as follows:

- Various unspecified armed groups and gunmen have attacked civilians in Doleib Hill (Malakal, April 2019),¹²¹ in Kilo and Agordit (Maban, June 2019),¹²² while a SPLM-IO prison officer was killed by unknown gunmen near Mandeng (25 August 2019);¹²³
- SPLM-IO forces have attacked civilian farmers at Jikou (6 December 2019),¹²⁴ and a Relief International compound in Bunj (1 December 2019);¹²⁵
- SPLM-IO splinter group, associated with the Cie-Waw section of the Eastern Jikany Nuer militia, burned down the town of Turow (Upper Nile state) in retaliation for losing control of Maiwut, looting and sexually assaulting women;¹²⁶
- Police Forces of South Sudan allegedly tortured a Member of Parliament in Pagak, after he had been arrested alongside three other local politicians (27 April 2019);¹²⁷
- Sudan Armed Forces, allegedly abducted 17 or 18 South Sudanese tax agents in the border areas of Adham and Gongbar (1 November 2019);¹²⁸
- Sexual assault and rapes: unknown number of women were raped in a series of clashes between armed civilians and government-allied forces, and the SPLA-IO in Maiwut in the course of 2019;¹²⁹
- Explosion/Remote Violence: on 30 December 2019, a Sudanese pastoralist was killed by unexploded ordnance at an unspecified location in Manyo county, while two others were injured.¹³⁰

Impact on population

In line with UN bodies and Human Rights Watch latest reports on South Sudan,¹³¹ the HRC reported, in a document covering the period September 2018 – December 2019, that:

‘During the period under review, government forces were responsible for most of the attacks against civilians, including pillaging, conflict-related sexual violence together with other forms of sexual and gender-based violence, arbitrary arrest and detention, denial of the freedoms of expression, opinion and assembly, the recruitment and the use of children in armed forces and arbitrary restrictions on humanitarian aid, in violation of human rights law and international humanitarian law. Armed groups have also

¹²¹ Radio Tamazuj, 1 killed, 3 injured in attack in Central Upper Nile, 21 April 2019, [url](#); Radio Tamazuj, Five suspects arrested over Doleib incident, 23 April 2019, [url](#)

¹²² Radio Tamazuj, 1 injured in attack on villagers in Northern Upper Nile, 9 June 2019, [url](#)

¹²³ Radio Tamazuj, IO police officer killed in eastern Upper Nile, 27 August 2019, [url](#)

¹²⁴ Radio Tamazuj, Calm returns to Maiwut after clashes, 10 December 2019, [url](#)

¹²⁵ Radio Tamazuj, US embassy condemns attack on aid workers in Maban, 4 December 2019, [url](#)

¹²⁶ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 11 December 2019, [url](#), p. 5; UNSC, Letter dated 20 November 2019 from the Panel of Experts on South Sudan addressed to the President of the Security Council, 22 November 2019, [url](#), pp. 26-27

¹²⁷ Eye Radio, Law makers in Maiwut arrested for declining to impeach deputy governor, 29 April 2019, [url](#)

¹²⁸ Eye Radio, 18 S. Sudanese officials kidnapped by armed men near Renk, 8 November 2019, [url](#)

¹²⁹ Eye Radio, Women were raped in Maiwut clashes July 2019 – CTSAMVM, 22 January 2020, [url](#)

¹³⁰ Radio Tamazuj, Grenade explosion kills 1, injures 2 in Fashoda, 2 January 2020, [url](#)

¹³¹ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 26 February 2020, [url](#); UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 11 December 2019, [url](#); UNSC, Letter dated 20 November 2019 from the Panel of Experts on South Sudan addressed to the President of the Security Council, 22 November 2019, [url](#); UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 10 September 2019, [url](#); HRW, South Sudan: Government Forces Abusing Civilians, 4 June 2019, [url](#); HRW, World Report 2020 – South Sudan, Events of 2019, 2020, [url](#)

committed serious violations of human rights law and international humanitarian law, including through the recruitment and the use of children'.¹³²

In the whole country '[a] total of 535 incidents regarding humanitarian access were reported in 2019, compared with 760 in 2018, although many remained underreported. However, the operational environment for humanitarians remained challenging' and ensued frequent relocations.¹³³

In line with the situation described above ([List of incidents](#) Upper Nile), on 26 February 2020 the United Nations Secretary General (UNSG) reported that '[f]ighting between the parties in Maiwut County, Upper Nile, and in Yei County and Lainya County, Central Equatoria, led to the displacement of more than 19,000 civilians – of these, over 8,000 sought refuge in Ethiopia'.¹³⁴

In particular in the Maiwut region in Upper Nile, '[m]ost internally displaced people lost their personal household items during an attack on their villages in Maiwut and some reported being subjected to human rights violations, including conflict-related sexual violence'.¹³⁵

At the same time '[h]umanitarian access deteriorated in December 2019 compared with November 2019', while 'the humanitarian presence decreased in different locations of Upper Nile', as a consequence of the fact that 'several armed men broke into an international NGO compound in Maban... assaulting five staff members and stealing their personal items'.¹³⁶

The number of IDPs in Upper Nile state was 215 888 as of February 2020.¹³⁷

6.2. Western Equatoria state¹³⁸

Western Equatoria state is located in the south-western part of South Sudan. The state's capital is Yambio.¹³⁹

Actors

The main actors involved in military operations and armed clashes in the Western Equatoria state are the following:

- Governmental forces, including the SSPDF, SSNPS and police forces of NSS,
- Opposition groups, including SPLM-IO, NAS and SSOA.¹⁴⁰

For further details on these actors, please see general [Main armed actors](#).

Additionally, at regional level are active:

- Eastern Lakes Communal Militia: local (youth) militias in eastern Lakes State¹⁴¹,

¹³² UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), p. 7

¹³³ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 26 February 2020, [url](#), pp. 6-7

¹³⁴ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 26 February 2020, [url](#), p. 6

¹³⁵ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 26 February 2020, [url](#), p. 6

¹³⁶ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 26 February 2020, [url](#), p. 6

¹³⁷ UNOCHA, South Sudan, Humanitarian snapshot February 2020, 11 March 2020, [url](#)

¹³⁸ For the map of the Western Equatoria state, see: UN OCHA, Map of Western Equatoria State, December 2016, [url](#)

¹³⁹ UNMISS, [South Sudan Map], February 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁰ ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴¹ RVI, Peace is the Name of Our Cattle-Camp, Local responses to conflict in Eastern Lakes State, South Sudan, 2018, [url](#)

- Mvolo Communal Militia: (youth) communal militia of the Mvolo County¹⁴²,
- Unidentified Communal Militias¹⁴³,
- Unidentified Armed Group(s).¹⁴⁴

List of incidents

In the reference period, as reported by the UNSC '[i]n ... Western Equatoria, clashes between the South Sudan People's Defence Forces and the National Salvation Front (NAS) continued'.¹⁴⁵ In particular, in the last months, December 2019 – February 2020, 'ethnic tensions between the Azande and Balanda coupled with leadership challenges within SPLA-IO forces led to internal clashes'.¹⁴⁶

Based on ACLED data, a data set compiled from media reported incidents (only), more than 25 incidents have been reported in the Western Equatoria region during the reference period, resulting in almost 30 casualties.¹⁴⁷ Either one or more of the following sources reported about these incidents: Catholic Radio Network, Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism in South Sudan (CTSAMM), Eye Radio (South Sudan), Radio Miraya, Radio Tamazuj, Sudan Tribune, UNMISS, UNSC.¹⁴⁸ These incidents can be grouped as follows:

- a. Over 10 battles/armed clashes
- b. Over 15 episodes of violence against civilians¹⁴⁹

The following list is merely indicative and does not claim to be exhaustive or complete.

Battles

- SSPDF forces clashed with: NAS rebels in Jambo and in Lainya (17 August 2019),¹⁵⁰ and in Landili (throughout August 2019);¹⁵¹ SPLM-IO, allegedly - unspecified gunmen, in Tambura (17 August 2019);¹⁵² SSOA forces at Mogoroko village (25 June 2019);¹⁵³
- Police Forces of South Sudan faced a number of attacks and/or clashed with various forces/rebel groups/unspecified gunmen on various occasions: police officers engaged with raiders in the Bahr Grindi county (11 January 2020);¹⁵⁴ two police officers were shot dead, one in Yambio (11 January 2020)¹⁵⁵ and one in the Ringasi area (4 July 2019), while another NSS officer was stabbed while patrolling Tambura town (25 December 2019);¹⁵⁶
- SPLM-IO soldiers clashed in Tambura area with other SPLM-IO soldiers of Balanda ethnicity who had fled from Sue cantonment site (around 3 January 2020);¹⁵⁷

¹⁴² Non Violent Peace Force, February-April 2011 Sudan Field Report, 20 May 2011, [url](#)

¹⁴³ ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁴ ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁵ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 26 February 2020, [url](#), p. 4

¹⁴⁶ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 26 February 2020, [url](#), p. 4

¹⁴⁷ ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁸ ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁹ ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵⁰ Radio Tamazuj, NAS accuses government of fresh attacks, government denies, 26 August 2019, [url](#)

¹⁵¹ CTSAMVM, as quoted by ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵² Radio Tamazuj, Gunmen attack Tambura commissioner's home, wounding bodyguard, 20 August 2019, [url](#)

¹⁵³ CTSAMVM, as quoted by ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵⁴ Eye Radio, Armed cattle raiders kill two in Amadi, 13 January 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵⁵ Radio Tamazuj, Policeman shot dead in Yambio, 14 January 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵⁶ Radio Tamazuj, National security officer injured in knife attack in Tambura, 1 January 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵⁷ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 26 February 2020, [url](#), p. 4

- Unspecified armed youth groups clashed at unspecified locations in Mvolo county, displacing approximately 5000 people.¹⁵⁸

Violence Against Civilians

In the reference period, numerous attacks over civilians have been reported, perpetrated by known and unknown (unspecified) armed forces alike. There are reports of indiscriminate abductions, including collateral killings, for ransoming, sexual assault, and looting purposes. Below an indicative list of the events as reported by relevant media engaged in the area:

- Abductions by unknown attackers/unspecified armed groups: 3-4 people in Affa, Maridi county (27 January 2020);¹⁵⁹ woman in unspecified location west of Tambura (6 November 2019);¹⁶⁰ 17 civilians in Maridi county (17 September 2019);¹⁶¹ ambushes and abductions in Mamber and Karika (12 September 2019);¹⁶² six students at an unspecified location in or near Bahr Grinti county (early July 2019);¹⁶³
- Abductions by SPLM-IO forces/soldiers: children from Nabiana (6 December 2019);¹⁶⁴ 7-10 civilians at Bazumbura Boma (27 October 2019);¹⁶⁵ 6 residents at Rimenze IDP camp (15 October 2019);¹⁶⁶ 10 women at Rimenze IDP camp, as proxies for their husbands. The women were reported to have been sexually assaulted (29 May 2019);¹⁶⁷
- Random attacks with civilian casualties: cattle raiders killed two people at Bahr Grindi, Mvolo county (11 January 2020);¹⁶⁸ a bus was attacked in the area of Buaji, leaving two casualties and wounded people (24-25 August 2019); 4 men killed at Kpakpadupo, along the road CAR-Tambura (18 May 2019);¹⁶⁹ 1 civilian killed on the Tambura-Yambio road (March 2019);¹⁷⁰
- Police officials' abuse: arbitrary arrest, beating and killings of civilians accused of witchcraft in Yambio county (7 August 2019);¹⁷¹ suspected rebels arrested by police officer and allegedly killed by the Tambura governor (April 2019);¹⁷²
- Sexual assault and rapes: an armed group raped an 11 year-old girl in Yambio (5 April 2019);¹⁷³ a suspected soldier in uniform raped an 11 year-old boy in Yambio (4 April 2019);¹⁷⁴ 10 women at Rimenze IDP camp were sexually assaulted (29 May 2019).¹⁷⁵

Impact on population

¹⁵⁸ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 26 February 2020, [url](#), p. 6

¹⁵⁹ ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁰ ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶¹ Eye Radio, Several abducted in Maridi state, 17 September 2019, [url](#)

¹⁶² CTSAMVM, as quoted by ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶³ Radio Tamazuj, Education official killed in Amadi State, 11 July 2019, [url](#)

¹⁶⁴ Radio Tamazuj, SPLA-IO accused of kidnaping youth in Tambura, 10 December 2019, [url](#)

¹⁶⁵ CTSAMVM, as quoted by ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁶ CTSAMVM, as quoted by ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁷ CTSAMVM, as quoted by ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁸ Eye Radio, Armed cattle raiders kill two in Amadi, 13 January 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁹ Radio Tamazuj, Four people killed along Tambura-CAR road, 24 May 2019, [url](#)

¹⁷⁰ Radio Tamazuj, Local trader killed on Tambura-Yambio road, 27 March 2019, [url](#)

¹⁷¹ Eye Radio, Family of the victim of police brutality in Yambio seeking justice, 16 August 2019, [url](#)

¹⁷² Eye Radio, Tombura gov. accused of extra-judicial killing, 29 April 2019, [url](#)

¹⁷³ Eye Radio, Two teens raped in Gbudue, 7 April 2019, [url](#)

¹⁷⁴ Eye Radio, Two teens raped in Gbudue, 7 April 2019, [url](#)

¹⁷⁵ CTSAMVM, as quoted by ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

In line with UN bodies' and Human Rights Watch latest reports on South Sudan,¹⁷⁶ the HRC reported, in a document covering the period September 2018 – December 2019, that:

'During the period under review, government forces were responsible for most of the attacks against civilians, including pillaging, conflict-related sexual violence together with other forms of sexual and gender-based violence, arbitrary arrest and detention, denial of the freedoms of expression, opinion and assembly, the recruitment and the use of children in armed forces and arbitrary restrictions on humanitarian aid, in violation of human rights law and international humanitarian law. Armed groups have also committed serious violations of human rights law and international humanitarian law, including through the recruitment and the use of children'.¹⁷⁷

In line with the situation described above (List of Incidents Western Equatoria), the UNSG in the last report about the situation in South Sudan, states that '[c]lashes between armed youth groups in Mvolo County... in late January displaced an estimated 5,000 people',¹⁷⁸ while '[c]ommunal fighting, violent cattle raids, forceful recruitment and forced relocation were reported'.¹⁷⁹

The number of IDPs in Western Equatoria state was 64 027 as of February 2020.¹⁸⁰

6.3. Central Equatoria state (Yei and Lobonok)¹⁸¹

Central Equatoria state is located in the southern part of South Sudan. The state's capital is also the country's capital, Juba.¹⁸²

Actors

As reported by the UNHRC in its last report '[w]hile parts of Central Equatoria State [are] controlled by elements of the National Salvation Front and the Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition (pro-Riek Machar) (SPLA-IO (RM)), others remained under the control of government forces'.¹⁸³ The main actors involved in military operations and armed clashes in the Central Equatoria state are:

- Governmental forces, including the SSPDF, SSNPS and police forces of NSS;
- Opposition groups, including NAS, SPLM-IO and SSOA.¹⁸⁴

For further details on these actors, please see general [Main armed actors](#).

Additionally, at regional level are active:

¹⁷⁶ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 26 February 2020, [url](#); UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 11 December 2019, [url](#); UNSC, Letter dated 20 November 2019 from the Panel of Experts on South Sudan addressed to the President of the Security Council, 22 November 2019, [url](#); UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 10 September 2019, [url](#); HRW, South Sudan: Government Forces Abusing Civilians, 4 June 2019, [url](#); HRW, World Report 2020 – South Sudan, Events of 2019, 2020, [url](#)

¹⁷⁷ UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), p. 7

¹⁷⁸ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 26 February 2020, [url](#), p. 6

¹⁷⁹ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 26 February 2020, [url](#), p. 6

¹⁸⁰ UNOCHA, South Sudan, Humanitarian snapshot February 2020, 11 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸¹ For the map of the Central Equatoria state, see: UN OCHA, Map of Central Equatoria State, December 2016, [url](#)

¹⁸² UNMISS, [South Sudan Map], February 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸³ UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), p. 8

¹⁸⁴ ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

- The SSPDF – Tiger Division, South Sudan VIP Protection Division¹⁸⁵,
- Eastern Lakes communal militia: local (youth) militias in eastern Lakes State¹⁸⁶,
- Unidentified communal militias¹⁸⁷,
- Unidentified armed group(s).¹⁸⁸

List of incidents

In the reference period, as reported by UNSC '[i]n ... Central Equatoria, clashes between the South Sudan People's Defence Forces and the National Salvation Front (NAS) continued'.¹⁸⁹ In the period December 2019 – February 2020, '[a]fter targeting four barracks of the South Sudan People's Defence Forces along the Lainya-Yei-Lasu axis ..., NAS activity has largely subsided in the area, moving westwards towards Maridi and Mundri'.¹⁹⁰

Based on ACLED data, a data set compiled from media reported incidents, more than 70 incidents have been reported in the Western Equatoria region in the reference period, resulting in more than 160 casualties.¹⁹¹ Either one or more of the following sources reported about these incidents: Catholic Radio Network, CTSAMM, Daily Monitor (Uganda), Eye Radio (South Sudan), Gurtong Trust, IOM, IRIN, Juba Monitor, Radio Miraya, Radio Tamazuj, South Sudan News Agency, Sudan Tribune, UNMISS, UNSC.¹⁹² These incidents can be grouped and listed as follows:

- a. Over 25 battles/armed clashes
- b. Over 40 episodes of violence against civilians
- c. 2 explosions/remote Violence¹⁹³

Battles

Throughout the reference period (1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020), the Central Equatoria State (which is also the site of the State Capital, Juba), has been the theatre of episodes of violence and armed clashes that have taken place on a regular basis. During the period following trends/patterns can be observed:

- Clashes between NAS rebels and SSPDF forces. NAS rebels were reported/claimed to have attacked/ambushed SSPDF forces, or, in a few occasions to have responded to SSPDF attacks, in various locations in the Central Equatoria State: Kalipapa (18 December 2019), Lasu (13-14 December 2019, 10 September 2019),¹⁹⁴ Mitika (13-14 December 2019),¹⁹⁵ Loka (10 December 2019), Lainya (10 December and September 2019, 17 August 2019),¹⁹⁶ Lora (8 November 2019),

¹⁸⁵ Eye Radio, Defense Board agrees to 12,000 VIP protection force, 17 June 2019, [url](#)

¹⁸⁶ RVI, Peace is the Name of Our Cattle-Camp, Local responses to conflict in Eastern Lakes State, South Sudan, 2018, [url](#)

¹⁸⁷ ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁸ ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁹ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 26 February 2020, [url](#), p. 4; UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), p. 7

¹⁹⁰ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 26 February 2020, [url](#), p. 4

¹⁹¹ ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁹² ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁹³ ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁹⁴ Radio Tamazuj, SSPDF, NAS trade accusations over fighting in Yei River State, 16 December 2019, [url](#)

¹⁹⁵ Radio Tamazuj, SSPDF, NAS trade accusations over fighting in Yei River State, 16 December 2019, [url](#)

¹⁹⁶ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 11 December 2019, [url](#), p. 4

Yei (road to DRC, 30 October 2019),¹⁹⁷ Esebi (27 October 2019),¹⁹⁸ Tore (11 September 2019), Logo (8 September 2019), Lorugo (or Lofugo, 8-9 September 2019),¹⁹⁹ Maridi-Yei road (Tore, 6 September 2019), Lorega (5 September 2019), Mukaya and Bereka (4-5 September 2019),²⁰⁰ Loka West (21 August 2019),²⁰¹ Karpeto and Umo (31 July 2019), Karpeto near Lobonok (22-23 July 2019),²⁰² between Lainya and Wonduruba counties (26-27 May 2019),²⁰³ between Kegulu and Lutaya (24 May 2019), Kejiko (or Kegiko, 22 May 2019 and 22 April 2019), between Goli and Pisak (21 April 2019), Kirikwa (13 April 2019).²⁰⁴

- Clashes between SPLM-IO and NAS forces. SPLM-IO and NAS forces clashed in or near Rasolo in Yei county (20 January 2020), and near Mangalla (6 September 2019).²⁰⁵
- Random killings by unidentified actors: traffic police officer in Ligi (30 November 2019),²⁰⁶ Lt. Gen. Malual Ayom Dor's security guard (30 September 2019).²⁰⁷

Violence Against Civilians

In the reference period, in the Central Equatoria State, civilians have regularly been attacked by various actors/forces (as detailed below). The following trends/patterns can be observed by analysing the raw data:

- Abductions
 - I. Unidentified armed groups: abducted 62 civilians in Rasolo and Minyori (27 January 2020);²⁰⁸ entered the residence of a Ugandan businessman in Juba and abducted him (16 November 2019);²⁰⁹ abducted and tortured about 13 people near Morsak (20 September 2019); ambushed vehicles at Payawa and abducted three civilians (27 July 2019);²¹⁰ attacked a commercial vehicle at Panpitiya near Mangalla, killing one person and abducting two children (24 May 2019);²¹¹
 - II. NAS rebels: were accused to have abducted two women in Morobo county (13-14 March 2020);²¹² abducted 7 civilian, the NSS claimed, at an unspecified location in Juba county (15 November 2019); allegedly abducted a chief from the village of Dimo (11 October 2019);²¹³ allegedly abducted a chief, a pastor, and a businessman from the village of Yondoru (11 October 2019);²¹⁴ abducted, four village elders from Mukaya (27 September 2019);²¹⁵

¹⁹⁷ Radio Tamazuj, Yei governor survives a road ambush, 4 November 2019, [url](#)

¹⁹⁸ Garda World, South Sudan: Aid workers kidnapped and killed in Yei River state October 27, 31 October 2019, [url](#)

¹⁹⁹ Radio Tamazuj, Government and rebel NAS forces clash in Equatoria areas, 9 September 2019, [url](#)

²⁰⁰ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 11 December 2019, [url](#), p. 4

²⁰¹ Sudan Tribune, NAS accuses South Sudanese army, militias of attacks 23 August 2019, [url](#)

²⁰² UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 10 September 2019, [url](#), p. 5

²⁰³ Radio Tamazuj, NAS accuses SSPDF of renewed attacks in Yei, SSPDF denies allegations, 29 May 2019, [url](#)

²⁰⁴ ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

²⁰⁵ ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

²⁰⁶ Radio Tamazuj, Traffic policeman killed along Yei-Kaya road, 3 December 2019, [url](#)

²⁰⁷ Radio Tamazuj, Gunmen attack army general's house in Juba, security guard killed, 1 October 2019, [url](#)

²⁰⁸ Radio Tamazuj, Over 60 civilians abducted in Tore County: lawmaker, 7 February 2020, [url](#)

²⁰⁹ Daily Monitor, Ugandan kidnapped in South Sudan, 18 November 2019, [url](#)

²¹⁰ Gurtong, Highway Banditry in Yei River State Condemned, 29 July 2019, [url](#)

²¹¹ Radio Tamazuj, One killed, two children abducted in Juba-Bor road ambush, 27 May 2019, [url](#)

²¹² Radio Tamazuj, NAS denies involvement in chief's death in Morobo, 31 March 2020, [url](#)

²¹³ Radio Tamazuj, 7 civilians abducted in Mukaya County: Official, 16 October 2019, [url](#)

²¹⁴ Radio Tamazuj, 7 civilians abducted in Mukaya County: Official, 16 October 2019, [url](#)

²¹⁵ Radio Tamazuj, 7 civilians abducted in Mukaya County: Official, 16 October 2019, [url](#)

allegedly abducted three civilians at an unspecified area in Mukaya county (4 September 2019);²¹⁶

- III. SPLM-IO forces: accused of having abducted three women in Kajo-Keji county, who reported their husbands had joined the NAS rebellion (early July 2019);²¹⁷
- IV. SSPDF soldiers: allegedly abducted in Juba a University student, and tortured him before releasing him (26 April 2019).²¹⁸

▪ Ambush, murder and extra-judicial killings

- I. Unknown/unspecified armed groups/gunmen have been held responsible for numerous acts of murder, violence and looting: on the road between Juba and Nesitu at the Jebel Amiyan area (22 February 2020); in Jebel Yesua area of Gudele (11 February 2020); shot dead a prison officer in Juba (5 February 2020); near Gudele, where gunmen wearing police uniforms shot dead a Law lecturer from the University of Juba (12 January 2020);²¹⁹ killed two civilians in Abegi (21 September 2019); according to a report of September 18, since mid-August 2019, there were at least five incidents of attacks against civilians (including sexual violence, robbery, and beatings, including against international aid workers) by armed men at checkpoints in Juba (18 September 2019); between Ombasi and Mongo where civilians were ambushed and several civilians were injured (27 August 2019); killed 12 civilians and wounded 5, at an unspecified location close to Juba along the Juba-Bor road (around 12 August 2019); shot and wounded two youths at Sanjasiri (25 July 2019);²²⁰ killed a woman in Dongoro (around 17 June 2019).²²¹
- II. Unknown cattle raiders: attacked Bilinyang payam in Mangalla (15 December 2019);²²² armed youth (suspected of coming from the disputed Eastern Lakes state) killed three civilians who were pursuing cattle raiders from Terekeka (11 September 2019);²²³ gelweng (cattle guards) from the disputed Eastern Lakes state killed three civilians at Kindilo close to the border between the disputed Eastern Lakes and Terekeka states near Tali (9 September 2019);²²⁴ a chronic issue in the area;²²⁵
- III. SSPDF soldiers and NSS officers: allegedly killed the chief of Lujulu payam in Morobo county (13-14 March 2020);²²⁶ shot and killed a young man at Aru Junction (26 December 2019); arrested and tortured a civilian in Kopera (13 December 2019); shot and killed an elderly deaf man (17 November 2019); clashed with NAS rebels in Esebi, while three IOM volunteers were killed and two injured in the crossfire (27 October 2019);²²⁷ shot dead a civilian near Karpeto and Umo (31 July 2019); between January and April 2019, attacked 15 villages in the Central Equatoria region in areas between Lainya and Yei, causing several casualties;²²⁸

²¹⁶ ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

²¹⁷ Radio Tamazuj, Kajo-Keji commissioner accuses SPLM-IO of detaining three women 9 July 2019, [url](#)

²¹⁸ Eye Radio, University student accuses SSPDF of abduction, torture, 19 June 2019, [url](#)

²¹⁹ Radio Tamazuj, Gunmen kill Juba University lecturer, 13 January 2020, [url](#)

²²⁰ Gurtong, Highway Banditry in Yei River State Condemned, 29 July 2019, [url](#)

²²¹ ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

²²² Radio Miraya, Post from 19 December 2019, [url](#)

²²³ Radio Tamazuj, 3 killed in Terekeka road ambush, 16 September 2019, [url](#)

²²⁴ Radio Tamazuj, 3 killed in Terekeka road ambush, 16 September 2019, [url](#)

²²⁵ United Nations Peacekeeping, Mobile peace campaign brings hope to cattle camps in the Terekeka area, 4 April 2019, [url](#)

²²⁶ Sudan Tribune, South Sudan army responsible for murder, rape in Central Equatoria: NAS, 27 March 2020, [url](#)

²²⁷ Garda World, South Sudan: Aid workers kidnapped and killed in Yei River state October 27, 31 October 2019, [url](#)

²²⁸ UNMISS, Conflict-Related Violations and Abuses in Central Equatoria, September 2018-April 2019, 3 July 2019, [url](#), p. 13

- IV. SPLM-IO rebels: attacked and severely hit a civilian at Yaribe boma and robbed an elderly woman (24 January 2020);²²⁹
- V. Pastoralist Militia: shot two IDP youths outside of the UN PoC site at UN House (15 October 2019);²³⁰
- VI. NAS rebels: allegedly attacked a passenger vehicle on a road coming out of Ye, killing two and wounding one (21 August 2019).²³¹

▪ Sexual violence

The National Salvation Front (NAS) accused the South Sudanese army of raping a woman and her daughter during attacks that took place in Moya village in Lasu Payam of Yei county (25 March 2020);²³² three women were raped by armed men in the outskirts of Yei (11-12 January 2020);²³³ six attackers (two soldiers (one Tiger Division), and four gang members raped a woman in Juba (26 September 2019);²³⁴ a woman was raped at Gumbo by two men, one of whom was a Military Intelligence officer with the SSPDF Tiger Division (17 September 2019);²³⁵ between January and April 2019, 69 women (of whom 12 were girls) were reported to have been raped by government;²³⁶

▪ Lootings

SSPDF soldiers were reported to have looted the houses of the residents of the Shirkat area of Gumbo (2 December 2019);²³⁷ NAS rebels alleged that SPLM-IO troops looted and "tortured" the residents in the area of Mangalla (6 September 2019);²³⁸

▪ Explosions/Remote Violence

On 9 December 2019, an unexploded grenade detonated at an unspecified location in the disputed Rokon county, wounding six children.²³⁹ On May 9th, the newly appointed commissioner for Wonduruba county was killed along with three soldiers when his car hit a landmine at an unspecified location on the Lainya-Wonduruba road.²⁴⁰

Impact on population

In line with UN bodies' and Human Rights Watch latest reports on South Sudan,²⁴¹ the HRC reported, in a document covering the period September 2018 – December 2019, that:

²²⁹ Radio Tamazuj, SPLA-IO soldiers accused of robbery in Morobo, 30 January 2020, [url](#)

²³⁰ Radio Tamazuj, 1 killed, 1 injured in shooting near UN Juba POC 17 October 2019, [url](#)

²³¹ Eye Radio, Travelers killed on Yei-Juba road, 25 August 2019, [url](#)

²³² Sudan Tribune, South Sudan army responsible for murder, rape in Central Equatoria: NAS, 27 March 2020, [url](#)

²³³ Juba Monitor, Three women raped at gunpoint in Yei River State, 16 January 2020, [url](#)

²³⁴ CTSAMVM, as quoted by ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

²³⁵ CTSAMVM, as quoted by ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

²³⁶ UNMISS, Conflict-Related Violations and Abuses in Central Equatoria, September 2018-April 2019, 3 July 2019, [url](#), p. 13

²³⁷ Eye Radio, Demolition gunfire in Juba, 2 December 2019, [url](#)

²³⁸ ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

²³⁹ Radio Miraya, Six children have been wounded in a grenade explosion in Rokon county about 80kms west of Juba, Post 12 December 2019, [url](#)

²⁴⁰ Radio Tamazuj, Wonduruba county commissioner killed by landmine, 12 May 2019, [url](#)

²⁴¹ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 26 February 2020, [url](#); UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 11 December 2019, [url](#); UNSC, Letter dated 20 November 2019 from the Panel of Experts on South Sudan addressed to the President of the Security Council,

‘During the period under review, government forces were responsible for most of the attacks against civilians, including pillaging, conflict-related sexual violence together with other forms of sexual and gender-based violence, arbitrary arrest and detention, denial of the freedoms of expression, opinion and assembly, the recruitment and the use of children in armed forces and arbitrary restrictions on humanitarian aid, in violation of human rights law and international humanitarian law. Armed groups have also committed serious violations of human rights law and international humanitarian law, including through the recruitment and the use of children’.²⁴²

In line with the situation described above (List of Incidents Central Equatoria), in the last report on the situation in South Sudan (December 2019 – February 2019), the UNSG states that ‘[fi]ghting between the parties in Maiwut County, Upper Nile, and in Yei County and Lainya County, Central Equatoria, led to the displacement of more than 19,000 civilians – of these, over 8,000 sought refuge in Ethiopia’.²⁴³

In response to NAS attacks on their positions, starting in December 2019, government forces began operations against the groups in parts of Yei, Lujulo, Morobo, Mukaya, Otogo, and Mugwo counties. Human Rights Watch reports that these operations ‘caused approximately 9,000 people to flee to the town of Yei and another 5,000 to the Democratic Republic of Congo’.²⁴⁴

The HRC states that ‘during the period under review, members of SPLA-IO (RM) Division 6A (based in Achot- Wau), and government forces [...] continued to recruit, train and use children aged as young as 12 years’ in several states, including ‘Central Equatoria States, the latter the powerbase of the National Salvation Front’.²⁴⁵

Based on a recent report released by UNMISS, with focus on Central Equatoria, the Human Rights Division documented, in the period January – April 2019:

‘56 incidents, which resulted in the killing of 41 civilians (including 10 women and two boys), the wounding of 17, and the abduction of 37 (including 13 women and three girls). Additionally, 69 women and girls were subjected to rape and other forms of sexual violence. These incidents also included 21 attacks on villages, which were characterized by the widespread looting and destruction of private property, and in some cases, the destruction of public property as well. During this second phase, Government forces were responsible for 41 of 56 incidents, while organized armed groups were responsible for the remaining 15.’²⁴⁶

The number of IDPs in Central Equatoria state was 208 853 as of February 2020.²⁴⁷

22 November 2019, [url](#); UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 10 September 2019, [url](#); HRW, South Sudan: Government Forces Abusing Civilians, 4 June 2019, [url](#); HRW, World Report 2020 – South Sudan, Events of 2019, 2020, [url](#)

²⁴² UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 24 February – 20 March 2020, A/HRC/43/56, [url](#), p. 7,

²⁴³ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 26 February 2020, [url](#), p. 6

²⁴⁴ HRW, South Sudan: Government Forces Abusing Civilians, 4 June 2019, [url](#)

²⁴⁵ UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 24 February – 20 March 2020, A/HRC/43/56, [url](#), p. 12

²⁴⁶ UNMISS, Conflict-Related Violations and Abuses in Central Equatoria, September 2018-April 2019, 3 July 2019, [url](#), p. 13

²⁴⁷ UNOCHA, South Sudan, Humanitarian snapshot February 2020, 11 March 2020, [url](#)

6.4. Lakes state²⁴⁸

Lakes State is located in central South Sudan and has Rumbek as its capital.²⁴⁹ Lakes State was dissolved in October 2015 following a decree establishing 28 states instead of the 10 previously established states. As a result, the states of Eastern Lakes, Gok and Western Lakes were created.²⁵⁰ Lakes State was re-established in February 2020.²⁵¹

Actors

According to data provided by ACLED, based on several news media, actors in violent incidents in the Lakes State are in a large majority unidentified armed groups or communal militias²⁵² such as:

- Agar Clan Dinka ethnic militia (Pakam Section),
- Athoi-Agar sub-clan militia,
- Atuot Clan Dinka ethnic militia,
- Cueibet communal militia,
- Ciec Clan Dinka ethnic militia
- Eastern Lakes communal militia,
- Gok Clan Dinka ethnic militia,
- Gok communal militia,
- Panyijiar communal militia,
- Pakam Clan Dinka ethnic militia,
- Western Lakes communal militia.²⁵³

Military forces of the government were involved in only one incident, on 24 July 2019. They killed six civilians who resisted disarmament ordered by the governor.²⁵⁴

In addition, according to HRW, 'in many places, political actors deliberately fuel underlying grievances and community antagonism for political gain. But in recent episodes, the violence and the type of weapons used has become more lethal and coordinated and the lines between armed youth groups, political, and military actors more blurred.'²⁵⁵

List of incidents

ACLED recorded for Lakes state in the reference period 88 violent incidents (battles/armed clashes and violence against civilians) with 378 recorded fatalities. Of these, 41 events were classified as violence against civilians with 75 fatalities. The other 47 violent incidents, recorded as battles and

²⁴⁸ For the map of the Lakes state, see: Map: OCHA, Lakes State Map (as of Dec 2016), 7 December 2016, [url](#)

²⁴⁹ Based on reading the map UNOCHA, Lakes State Map (as of Dec 2016), 7 December 2016, [url](#), and Eye Radio, End "political game" on number of states, Dr Elia urges parties, 20 April 2020, [url](#)

²⁵⁰ South Sudan, "Establishment Order Number 36/2015 For The Creation Of 28 States" in the decentralized governance system in the Republic of South Sudan, 2 October 2015, [url](#), para 4.16, 4.17, 4.18.

²⁵¹ Africanews, South Sudan's president agrees to have 10 states, 15 February 2020, [url](#)

²⁵² ACLED, ACLED database 1 April 2-19-31 March 2020, [url](#)

²⁵³ Based on an analysis of data in ACLED, ACLED database 1 April 2-19-31 March 2020, [url](#)

²⁵⁴ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, Report of the Secretary-General, 10 September 2019, [url](#), para. 30

²⁵⁵ HRW, South Sudan Needs to Address Cycles of Intercommunal Killings, 20 March 2020, [url](#)

armed clashes, led to 303 fatalities.²⁵⁶ An analysis by EASO showed that most events in Lakes state took place in Rumbek district, with Yirol district being second.²⁵⁷

Violence in Lakes state has erupted regularly in the reference period. According to the South Sudanese Radio Tamazuj, 'the routine of revenge attacks in Western Lakes prevails because of a lack of an efficient justice system.'²⁵⁸ According to ICRC, 'between November 2019 and February 2020, clashes between different communities close to Rumbek in central South Sudan killed more than 250 people and injured over 300.'²⁵⁹ Below are the events with the highest number of fatalities as recorded in ACLED database²⁶⁰ and reported in various media.

Below is a chronological overview of some security related incidents in Lakes in the period of 1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020:

- On 5 July 2019, armed youth from Western Lakes attacked Alel village in Gok, the clashes led to death of 7 people and three injuries. Sources said 'the attack was in retaliation to an earlier cattle raid'.²⁶¹
- On 21 July 2019, 'revenge attacks between armed youth from Gony and Thuyic sections in Western Lakes State' took place, killing at least 10 people and injuring four.²⁶² An incident between the same communities on 22 July leading to 11 fatalities is recorded by UNSC as 'persistent intra-Dinka (Agar) violence [...] in retaliation for an earlier attack against the Gony Dinka'.²⁶³
- On 13 August 2019, 13 civilians were killed in an attack by unidentified attackers in Eastern Lakes state. The attackers reportedly stole several herds of cattle.²⁶⁴
- On 31 August 2019 in Gok State, SSPDF soldiers who were taking cattle to the Gok State capital Cueibet (the cattle were a blood payment for a recent killing) were ambushed by 'the cattle keeper's armed youth'. Eight soldiers and two of the youth died.²⁶⁵
- On 22 September 2019, 11 people were killed and 14 wounded during clashes over land between the Nuer and Dinka clans in Yirol²⁶⁶ (Eastern Lake State²⁶⁷).
- On 27 November 2019, clashes between two sections of the Pakam community in Maper town led to 23 fatalities and 47 injuries.²⁶⁸ According to sources consulted by ACLED, the fights are reported related to the death of a trader 'by an unspecified Pakam Dinka clan' the previous day.²⁶⁹

²⁵⁶ ACLED, ACLED database 1 April 2-19-31 March 2020, [url](#)

²⁵⁷ Analysis by EASO based on ACLED, ACLED database 1 April 2-19-31 March 2020, [url](#)

²⁵⁸ Radio Tamazuj, 10 killed in revenge attacks in Western Lakes, 21 July 2019, [url](#)

²⁵⁹ ICRC, South Sudan: Hundreds wounded, villages looted in intercommunal fighting in Jonglei State, 4 March 2020, [url](#)

²⁶⁰ ACLED, ACLED database 1 April 2-19-31 March 2020, [url](#)

²⁶¹ Radio Tamazuj, 7 killed in inter-communal violence in Gok State, 12 July 2019, [url](#)

²⁶² Radio Tamazuj, 10 killed in revenge attacks in Western Lakes, 21 July 2019, [url](#); CEPO, 10 killed in revenge attacks in Western Lakes, 21 July 2019, [url](#)

²⁶³ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, Report of the Secretary-General [S/2019/722], 10 September 2019, [url](#), para. 34

²⁶⁴ CEPO, 13 killed, seven injured in Eastern Lakes state attack, 13 August 2019, [url](#)

²⁶⁵ Eye Radio, 8 SSPDF killed in Gok ambush attack, 3 September 2019, [url](#)

²⁶⁶ ACLED, ACLED database 1 April 2-19-31 March 2020, [url](#)

²⁶⁷ International Crisis Group, Crisiswatch, Tracking Conflict Worldwide [database], last updated March 2020, [url](#)

²⁶⁸ Radio Tamazuj, 23 killed in communal violence in Western Lakes, 28 November 2019, [url](#)

²⁶⁹ ACLED, ACLED database 1 April 2-19-31 March 2020, [url](#)

- On 29 November 2019, the two sections clashed again in the same area, leading to at least 56 deaths (some of whom may have died of injuries from the previous clash on 27 November), and more than 100 injured.²⁷⁰
- On 25 December 2019, cattle raiders attacked traders with large herds of cattle in Mudiriya, in Gok. Six traders were killed, 12 injured and 1 400 heads of cattle were raided.²⁷¹
- On 28 December 2019, 'tit-for-tat' clashes between Gak and Manuer sections of the Pakam community in Maper Town flared up again (see 27-29 November 2019) and killed 23 persons.²⁷²
- On 29 December 2019, two feuding sections of the Kok community (Kok-Awac and Kok-Pacuar) in Western Bahr Naam, Western Lakes, have reconciled during a peace and reconciliation conference, 'after seven years of conflict and revenge attacks, which claimed several lives.'²⁷³
- On 31 January and 1 February 2020, 53 people died in several clashes between sections of the Agar Dinka in Rumbek East County. According to a source, cited by ACLED, 'these attacks are a series of retaliatory clashes'.²⁷⁴
- On 14 March 2020, clashes occurred in Rumbek Centre between Gony, Dhiei, Kuei, Pakam and Rup communities, killing at least 41 people and injuring around 60 people.²⁷⁵ The clashes were reportedly 'in retaliation for the recent killing of two elderly men at Gun cattle camp'.²⁷⁶
- On 24 March 2020, five people were killed during fighting between Gak and Manuer sub-sections of the Pakam section of the Agar Dinka in Rumbek North county. The same communities clashed again on 28-29 March 2020, leading to 13 deaths and 17 wounded.²⁷⁷

Impact on population

In December 2019, incidents in Western Lakes were characterised by the UNMISS as 'intercommunal clashes [that] continue to result in the killing and injuring of civilians, cattle raiding and the looting of property.'²⁷⁸

On the same month, ICRC expressed concern about the 'sudden spike in violence' in Western Lakes state that 'continues to affect entire communities. Hundreds of homes have been looted over the past days, depriving families of their meagre resources and forcing them to flee for fear of further violence.'

²⁷⁹

²⁷⁰ ACLED, ACLED database 1 April 2-19-31 March 2020, [url](#). See also: Radio Tamazuj, Death toll from Western Lakes ethnic fighting rises to over 50, 2 December 2019, [url](#); CRC, South Sudan: 29 people suffering gunshot wounds from clashes evacuated by air to Juba, 5 December 2019, [url](#); Guardian (The), UN peacekeepers intervene after violent clashes in South Sudan, 6 December 2019, [url](#)

²⁷¹ Radio Tamazuj, Unknown gunmen kill six traders in Gok State, 27 December 2019, [url](#)

²⁷² CEPO, 23 killed in communal violence in Western Lakes, 28 December 2019, [url](#)

²⁷³ Radio Tamazuj, Two feuding communities reconcile in Western Bahr Naam, 29 December 2019, [url](#)

²⁷⁴ ACLED, ACLED database 1 April 2-19-31 March 2020, [url](#)

²⁷⁵ Radio Tamazui, Deadly intercommunal clashes reported in Lakes State, 16 March 2020 [url](#); International Crisis Group, Crisiswatch, Tracking Conflict Worldwide [database], last updated March 2020, [url](#)

²⁷⁶ ACLED, ACLED database 1 April 2-19-31 March 2020, [url](#)

²⁷⁷ ACLED, ACLED database 1 April 2-19-31 March 2020, [url](#); SSNN, South Sudan: Dozens killed in Lakes state tribal clashes, 3 April 2020, [url](#)

²⁷⁸ UNMISS, As UNMISS acts to deter violence in Maper, one community extends hand of peace, 3 December 2019, [url](#). See also Guardian (The), UN peacekeepers intervene after violent clashes in South Sudan, 6 December 2019, [url](#)

²⁷⁹ ICRC, South Sudan: 29 people suffering gunshot wounds from clashes evacuated by air to Juba, 5 December 2019, [url](#)

On 16 February 2020, clashes among communities in Rumbek North as a result of cattle raiding caused displacement of 2 738 persons (408 households) to Deng-Nhial site (Rumbek North County). More than a half of the displaced population were women (56%).²⁸⁰

The number of IDPs in Lakes state is 206 455 as of February 2020.²⁸¹

6.5. Jonglei state (including Pibor)²⁸²

The territory of Jonglei state comprised of the following new states between 2015 and 2020: Jonglei, Western Bleh, and Eastern Bleh.²⁸³ The boundaries of the state were again changed in February 2020, back into the pre-2015 borders, except for the southeastern part (Boma) which was reinstituted into Pibor administrative area.²⁸⁴ For this reason, this chapter includes Jongei as well as Pibor.

Jonglei state is located in central-eastern part of South Sudan and has Bor as its capital.²⁸⁵ Pibor Administrative Area has Pibor as its capital.²⁸⁶

Actors

Actors, based on an analysis of the incidents registered in the ACLED database, are in nearly all cases local communal militias.²⁸⁷ The two most often mentioned militias are:

- Murle ethnic militias: The Murle are divided into an agriculturalist group living in the eastern mountainous Boma plateau, and a pastoralist group living in the western Jonglei wetlands. They have been involved in conflicts with other ethnic groups including Bor Dinka and Lou Nuer.²⁸⁸
- Lou Nuer ethnic militias, such as the White army of Nuer youth. According to the UNHRC, their selected fighters called *gojam* wear uniforms and carry arms 'to protect civilians'.²⁸⁹

In 19 registered incidents, mostly cases of inter-communal violence, the actors were not known. The incidents took in large majority place in Nyirol, Urur, Pibor, Pochalla, Twin East and Duk districts.²⁹⁰

In January 2020, UNHCR reported on an increased involvement of 'members of the State apparatus' or SPLM-IO in 'brutal attacks, often premised on cattle raiding'.²⁹¹ In two cases recorded by ACLED, SPLM-IO forces attacked civilians.²⁹²

List of incidents

²⁸⁰ IOM, Tracking: Rumbek North, Lakes State (March 2020), 26 March 2020, [url](#)

²⁸¹ UNOCHA, South Sudan, Humanitarian snapshot February 2020, 11 March 2020, [url](#)

²⁸² For the map of the Jonglei state, see: UNOCHA, Jonglei State Map (as of Dec 2016), 7 December 2016, [url](#). For the map of the Pibor county, see: UNOCHA, South Sudan Pibor County reference map, March 2020, [url](#)

²⁸³ South Sudan, "Establishment Order Number 36/2015 For The Creation Of 28 States" in the decentralized governance system in the Republic of South Sudan, 2 October 2015, [url](#)

²⁸⁴ AfricaNews, South Sudan's president agrees to have 10 states, 15 February 2020, [url](#)

²⁸⁵ Based on reading UNOCHA, Jonglei State Map (as of Dec 2016), 7 December 2016, [url](#), and Eye Radio, End "political game" on number of states, Dr Elia urges parties, 20 April 2020, [url](#)

²⁸⁶ UNOCHA, South Sudan Pibor County reference map, March 2020, [url](#)

²⁸⁷ ACLED, ACLED database 1 April 2-19-31 March 2020, [url](#)

²⁸⁸ MRG, South Sudan, Murle, updated July 2018, [url](#)

²⁸⁹ UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), p. 34

²⁹⁰ ACLED, ACLED database 1 April 2-19-31 March 2020, [url](#)

²⁹¹ UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), p. 1

²⁹² ACLED, ACLED database 1 April 2-19-31 March 2020, [url](#)

ACLED registered 66 violent incidents (battles and violence against civilians) with 164 recorded fatalities. Of these, 44 events are classified as violence against civilians, with 48 fatalities. In 22 cases, violent events were classified as Battles and armed clashes, resulting in 116 fatalities, mainly in Pibor and Uror districts.²⁹³

Below is a chronological overview of some security related incidents in Jonglei and Boma (Pibor) in the period of 1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020:

- On 9 April 2019, at least 50 people were killed in clashes during cattle raids at the Luwaacodou cattle camp in Jebel Buma county. Murle youth were reported as the actors.²⁹⁴ The fighting continued the next day, on 10 April 2019.²⁹⁵
- On 2 May 2019, 17 fighters were killed during an attack by Murle raiders on a Jie community in Jebel Boma county. An estimated 104 women and children have gone missing.²⁹⁶
- On 15 and 19 December 2019, cattle raiders, reportedly Murle militia from Boma State, attacked pastoralists near Paliau. Seven fighters (raiders and pastoralists, coded by ACLED as Twic East militia) were killed and about 1 000 heads of cattle were taken.²⁹⁷
- On 18 and 19 February 2020, inter-communal fighting between militia from Murle and neighbouring Lou Nuer ethnic groups flared up in greater Pibor Administrative Area, reportedly 'after Lou Nuer youth from Akobo and Bieh areas attacked Jebel Nanaam and Bith Bith areas'.²⁹⁸
- On 26 February 2020, at least 15 persons were killed in clashes in Nyirol county, involving Murle militia, Lou Nuer militiamen, SSPDF and police. 'The attack in Nyirol County comes amid reports of clashes in parts of the greater Pibor area since last week', according to a media source.²⁹⁹
- 'On and/or around 1 March 2020', several 'serious clashes took place between thousands of Murle and Lou Nuer armed men' in and around Pibor, in Bolotinganu and Likuangole.³⁰⁰ UNOCHA noted: 'In Manyabol and Likuangole towns, the hardest-hit locations in Pibor County, government buildings, civilian houses, humanitarian facilities and other buildings were burnt down to the ground. Dead bodies of humans and animals are reportedly in the streets in Likuangole town.' Thousands of inhabitants have fled the area.³⁰¹
- On 4 March 2020, ICRC reported: that it 'treated nearly 70 people suffering from gunshot wounds over the past two weeks, as fighting broke out between thousands of armed men in several parts of Jonglei State.'³⁰²

Impact on population

The Community Empowerment for Progress Organization (CEPO) noted that '[c]onflict over grazing land and land resources frequently fuels intercommunal tensions in the Greater Bor area.'³⁰³ Jonglei

²⁹³ ACLED, ACLED database 1 April 2-19-31 March 2020, [url](#)

²⁹⁴ Radio Tamazuj, 50 killed in Boma cattle raid, 11 April 2019, [url](#)

²⁹⁵ ACLED, ACLED database 1 April 2-19-31 March 2020, [url](#)

²⁹⁶ ACLED, ACLED database 1 April 2-19-31 March 2020, [url](#)

²⁹⁷ Radio Tamazuj, 7 killed, 4 injured in Jonglei cattle raids: official, 19 December 2019, [url](#); ACLED, ACLED database 1 April 2-19-31 March 2020, [url](#); CEPO, 7 killed, 4 injured in Jonglei cattle raids, 19 December 2019, [url](#)

²⁹⁸ Radio Tamazuj, Inter-communal fighting erupts in greater Pibor, 19 February 2020, [url](#)

²⁹⁹ Radio Tamazuj, Clashes in Nyirol County leaves 15 dead, 27 February 2020, [url](#)

³⁰⁰ ACLED, ACLED database 1 April 2-19-31 March 2020, [url](#)

³⁰¹ UNOCHA, South Sudan, Partners respond to needs of influx of IDPs in Pibor, last updated 27 March 2020, [url](#)

³⁰² ICRC, South Sudan: Hundreds wounded, villages looted in intercommunal fighting in Jonglei State, 4 March 2020, [url](#)

³⁰³ CEPO, Cattle Conflict and Related Intercommunal Tensions at Jonglei State, Bor Town, 16 December 2019, [url](#)

has since long witnessed inter-ethnic fighting over resources and power, resulting in numerous killings, cattle raidings and abductions.³⁰⁴ Repeated killings of large numbers of civilians triggered retaliation killings by armed men from the attacked community, according to the researcher Jana Krause. She noted: 'In the midst of the civil war, communal conflict and cattle raiding between the Dinka, Nuer, and Murle communities continued. The UNMISS Civil Affairs Division repeatedly tried to address these conflicts and brokered peace deals between communities.[...] Until the outbreak of the South Sudanese civil war, the situation in Jonglei remained the "greatest headache" for UNMISS'.³⁰⁵

The UNHRC noted in its January 2020 report that '[s]ince cattle has always been central to the livelihoods of the Lou Nuer, Dinka and Murle pastoralists [...] the spread of arms and increased militarization, commercialization of cattle and rising dowry price have incentivized cattle raiding and child abduction rendering it even more deadly in recent times.'³⁰⁶ Since half of February 2020, violence flared up in Jonglei State and Greater Pibor Administrative Area between Lou Nuer, Dinka, and Murle communities and has led to a wave of new IDPs. Nearly 8 500 people fled their villages in Pibor area, 450 in Bor County, and in Akobo and Nyirol counties, an estimated 16 000 people have been affected by the violence.³⁰⁷ The UNHRC reported: 'In Jonglei on 19 February [2020] dozens of civilians were killed and wounded, and over 200 women and children are believed to have been abducted and subjected to sexual violence.'³⁰⁸ According to Human Rights Watch, '[t]his spate of violence, part of a years-long cycle of attacks and counter-attacks between these ethnic groups, was triggered, as it has been in the past, by allegations that Murle abducted children.'³⁰⁹ Several local and international reports mention abductions of women and children.³¹⁰ Between 29 May and 27 August 2019, UNMISS facilitated a dialogue among religious leaders from the Dinka, Murle and Lou Nuer communities 'to promote peaceful coexistence' in greater Jonglei, which contributed to loosening of tensions in Boma and Akobo.³¹¹

February 2020 data by the World Food Programme (WFP) showed that Jonglei state is one of the places most severely hit by food insecurity in South Sudan, with most of its territory being one phase before famine. Several main roads to and from the capital Bor were closed.³¹² According to CEPO, '[p]articularly at risk were 20,000 people expected to be suffering from the most extreme levels of hunger [...] in Jonglei's Akobo, Ayod and Duk counties that were hit by heavy rains in 2019.'³¹³

The number of IDPs in Jonglei state was 196 055 as of February 2020.³¹⁴

³⁰⁴ UNMISS, Women from Jonglei and Boma sign agreement to end inter-communal fighting, 7 May 2019, [url](#)

³⁰⁵ Krause, J., Stabilization and Local Conflicts: Communal and Civil War in South Sudan, in: Ethnopolitics, Volume 18, 31 July 2019, [url](#)

³⁰⁶ UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), p. 33

³⁰⁷ HRW, [url](#); CEPO, Cattle Conflict and Related Intercommunal Tensions at Jonglei State, Bor Town, 16 December 2019, [url](#)

³⁰⁸ UNHRC, South Sudan: To achieve lasting peace, localized violence must end, says Bachelet, 20 March 2020, [url](#)

³⁰⁹ HRW, [url](#)

³¹⁰ CEPO, Cattle Conflict and Related Intercommunal Tensions at Jonglei State, Bor Town, 16 December 2019, [url](#); Radio Tamazuj, Three children abducted in Uror County, Jonglei, 6 March 2020, [url](#); Radio Tamazuj, Two children abducted in Jonglei road ambush, 23 January 2020, [url](#); Radio Tamazuj, Duk Pagak youth rescue four abducted girls, 1 December 2019, [url](#); Radio Tamazuj, Jonglei governor forms body for recovery of children abducted from Boma, 26 September 2019, [url](#); UNOCHA, South Sudan, Partners respond to needs of influx of IDPs in Pibor, last updated 27 March 2020, [url](#)

³¹¹ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, Report of the Secretary-General [S/2019/722], 10 September 2019, [url](#), para 47

³¹² WFP, South Sudan Emergency Dashboard, February 2020, 10 March 2020, [url](#)

³¹³ CEPO, Cattle Conflict and Related Intercommunal Tensions at Jonglei State, Bor Town, 16 December 2019, [url](#)

³¹⁴ UNOCHA, South Sudan, Humanitarian snapshot February 2020, 11 March 2020, [url](#)

6.6. Western Bahr el-Ghazal state

Western Bahr el-Ghazal state is located in the north-western part of South Sudan.³¹⁵ The state's capital is Wau.³¹⁶

Actors

The main actors involved in the conflict in the state of Western Bahr el-Ghazal are the following:

- Governmental forces, including SSPDF³¹⁷, SSNPS and police forces of the NSS³¹⁸,
- Opposition forces, including: SPLM-IO-Fertit Lions, SPLM-IO, South Sudan-United Front(SS - UF³¹⁹)³²⁰, Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition (SPLA-IO)³²¹
- Non-government forces including: ethnic militias such as Dinka Ethnic Militia³²², communal militias such as Tonj Communal Militia, Wau Communal Militia and unidentified communal militia³²³, Dinka pastoralists/cattle keepers, pastoralists of the Luo community³²⁴, and youth self-defence groups³²⁵.

For more information on the main national actors, please see the relevant section [Main armed actors](#).

List of incidents

According to ACLED³²⁶, 38 security incidents occurred in Western Bahr el-Ghazal state between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020. ACLED recorded the majority of these incidents as attacks against civilians. Other types of incidents included sexual violence and abduction/forced disappearances. In addition, armed clashes between various armed actors were recorded by ACLED. The highest number of security incidents took place in Jur River county, followed by Wau county, Raja county and Roc Roc Dong county.³²⁷

³¹⁵ UNMISS, [South Sudan Map], February 2020, [url](#)

³¹⁶ UN OCHA, South Sudan, Western Bahr el Ghazal reference map, January 2020, [url](#)

³¹⁷ UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), para. 21

³¹⁸ ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

³¹⁹ A rebel movement led by South Sudan's former army chief of staff Paul Malong. Source: Defense Post (the), Former South Sudan military chief Paul Malong launches new rebel group, 9 April 2018, [url](#)

³²⁰ ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

³²¹ The SPLA-IO mainly consists of army defectors, who remained loyal to Vice President Machar. Source: RULAC, Non-international armed conflict in South Sudan, 22 January 2020, [url](#)

³²² ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

³²³ ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

³²⁴ The Dinka cattle keepers and the pastoralists of the Luo community were in conflict particularly in the Jur River area. Source: UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), pp. 29 - 32; UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 14 June 2019, [url](#), para. 50

³²⁵ By August 2019, youth self-defence groups had emerged in the Jur River area in order to protect the Luo communities against attacks perpetrated by the Dinka cattle keepers. According to the UN Human Rights Commission 2020 Report, these groups purchased weapons from SSPDF soldiers. Source: UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), p. 31, para. 22

³²⁶ It should be noted that on 15 February 2020, President Salva Kiir Mayardit reinstated the 10 states system and three administrative areas of Abyei, Pibor and Ruweng, in South Sudan. Source: Mayai, A., T. and Tiitmamer, N., The Return to Ten States in South Sudan: Does it Restore Peace?, 20 February 2020, Sudd Institute (the), [url](#), pp. 1-2. However, ACLED, for the reporting period of 1 April 2019 until 31 March 2020, lists the 10 states and not the previous divisions.

³²⁷ ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

Below is a chronological overview of some security related incidents in Western Bahr el-Ghazal in the period of 1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020:

- Between 27 February and 28 May 2019, clashes triggered by destruction of crops resulted in 57 reported fatalities, destruction of property and displacement of hundreds of civilians.³²⁸
- On 22 April 2019, the village of Uliira, located in Kuajeina County, was attacked by armed individuals.³²⁹
- Between March and May 2019, elements of the Dinka militia were increasingly targeting members of the Luo community in Western Bahr el-Ghazal state, according to the UNSC. This resulted in 26 civilian deaths, 17 injuries and a number of civilian displaced.³³⁰
- On 16 June 2019, pastoralists from Tonj were suspected of killing 11 people and destroying houses in an attack on Rocrocdong County in Wau.³³¹
- In late August 2019, ACLED reported that the South Sudan United Front/Army (SSUF/A) was involved in several clashes with government forces around the town of Raja in Western Bahr el-Ghazal state.³³²
- Between 28 August and 30 November 2019, UNMISS reported on eight incidents of conflict-related sexual violence with 11 victims, mostly in Western Bahr el-Ghazal and in Central Equatoria.³³³ The actors involved in these incidents included SPLM-IO, SSPDF and NSS.³³⁴
- On 28 January 2020, tensions between SPLM-IO commanders led to kidnapping of 62 individuals outside of Wau.³³⁵

Impact on population

In March 2019, cattle raids in Western Bahr el-Ghazal state resulted in new waves of displacement for thousands of people.³³⁶

UNOCHA reported that Western Bahr el-Ghazal state was one of the main areas in South Sudan where localized inter- and intra-community violence was taking place, with the main actors being community-based militias and other armed elements. These types of incidents reportedly increased in early 2019 and decreased when the rainy season arrived in May 2019.³³⁷

For the reporting period between 29 May and 27 August 2019, the intercommunal violence was prominent in the greater area of Bahr el-Ghazal, with more than 70 persons being killed in incidents that took place across state borders, including between Warrap and Western Bahr el-Ghazal.³³⁸

A December 2019 UNSC report stated that a 'tense' security environment was created in the greater Bagari area in Western Bahr el-Ghazal state, due to an internal dispute within SPLM-IO.³³⁹ According to a UNSC report, Western Bahr el-Ghazal state was one of the areas where tensions between the

³²⁸ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 14 June 2019, [url](#), para. 29

³²⁹ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 14 June 2019, [url](#), para. 26

³³⁰ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 14 June 2019, [url](#), para. 50

³³¹ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 10 September 2019, [url](#), para. 33

³³² ACLED, Last man standing: An analysis of South Sudan's elongated peace process, 8 November 2019, [url](#)

³³³ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 11 December 2019, [url](#), para. 67

³³⁴ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 11 December 2019, [url](#), para. 67

³³⁵ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 26 February 2020, [url](#), para. 28

³³⁶ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 14 June 2019, [url](#), para. 32

³³⁷ UNOCHA, South Sudan - Humanitarian needs overview 2020, November 2019, [url](#), p. 8

³³⁸ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 10 September 2019, [url](#), para. 33

³³⁹ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 11 December 2019, [url](#), p. 5, para. 24

local commanders escalated in the period of 1 December 2019 - 15 February 2020.³⁴⁰ The UNHRC reported in January 2020 on continued recruitment and training of children in Western Bahr el-Ghazal.³⁴¹

The number of IDPs in Western Bahr el-Ghazal state was 105 465 as of February 2020.³⁴²

Impact on population in Jur River area

The UNHRC reported in January 2020 that in the Jur River Area in Western Bahr el-Ghazal state 'violent competition over pastoral resources escalated in localities where the rule of law was totally absent'.³⁴³ The nature of the attacks in the Jur River area included mainly killings, rape and sexual violence, abduction as well as looting and destruction of property.³⁴⁴

After 6 March 2019, the violence and attacks between members of the Luo community from Western Bahr el-Ghazal and cattle keepers from the Dinka community in Warrap intensified. Cattle keepers from the Dinka community in Tonj, in Warrap, returned to the Jur River area looking for pastoral land. According to a UNHRC report they 'allegedly raped a girl...' and the pastoralists retaliated by killing a cattle keeper in Tonj. Cattle keepers retaliated by launching an attack in the Kuajena, in Western Bahr el-Ghazal state on 17 March 2019 which resulted in the death of nine individuals and the injury of six others. Following these events, retaliatory attacks including killings, rape, abduction as well as looting and destruction of property followed in Kuajena, Rocrocdong, Udici and Alur in Wau in Western Bahr el-Ghazal state. On 1 April 2019 cattle keepers attacked a primary school sheltering IDPs from the Luo community in Kuajena. 11 civilians were killed in the attack. The source indicated that according to eyewitnesses, the state security forces in charge of protecting the IDPs did not intervene during the attack. In May 2019, cattle keepers from the Dinka community attacked the Luo community in Rocrocdong in Western Bahr el-Ghazal state. The attack resulted in at least two fatalities.³⁴⁵

On 18 June 2019, Dinka cattle keepers launched another attack in Rocrocdong. According to eyewitnesses, the attackers killed at least 11 individuals and subsequently proceeded to loot the food in the village.³⁴⁶ The source further noted that SSPDF soldiers 'reportedly played a key role in arming the cattle keepers from Tonj as they were from the same Dinka ethnic group'.³⁴⁷

According to the same source, SPLM-IO forces were accused of counter-attacking the cattle keepers and other members of the Dinka community. In addition, government security forces reportedly began targeting Luo youth and frequently accusing them of being rebels, which resulted in some these youth joining the armed opposition group for protection. In other cases, Luo commanders affiliated with SPLM-IO proceeded to recruit from the youth, on occasion forcefully, in order to avenge attacks to their community.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁰ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 26 February 2020, [url](#), para. 22

³⁴¹ UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), para. 46

³⁴² UNOCHA, South Sudan, Humanitarian snapshot February 2020, 11 March 2020, [url](#)

³⁴³ UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), para. 58

³⁴⁴ UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), para. 62

³⁴⁵ UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), Annex II, paras. 16-18

³⁴⁶ UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), Annex II, para. 20

³⁴⁷ UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), Annex II, para. 21

³⁴⁸ UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), Annex II, para. 23

6.7. Warrap state

Warrap state is located in the north of South Sudan.³⁴⁹ The state's capital is Kwajok.³⁵⁰

Actors

The main actors involved in the conflict in the state of Warrap are the following:

- Governmental forces, including SSPDF³⁵¹ and the SSNPS³⁵²,
- Opposition forces, including SPLM -IO³⁵³,
- Local non-governmental forces including ethnic militias such as Apuk Clan Dinka Ethnic³⁵⁴ Militia, Dinka Ethnic Militia, Bul Nuer³⁵⁵ Ethnic Militia, Rek Clan Dinka Ethnic Militia and communal militias such as Ajakkuac Communal Militia, Cueibet Communal Militia, Eastern Lakes Communal Militia, Gok Communal Militia, Northern Liech Communal Militia, Thiik Communal Militia, Tonj Communal Militia, Tonj East Communal Militia, Tonj North Communal Militia, Wau Communal Militia and Unidentified Communal Militia.³⁵⁶

For more information on the main national actors, please see the relevant section [Main armed actors](#).

List of incidents

ACLED reported 58 incidents at the state of Warrap between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020. The majority of these incidents were reportedly either attacks or armed clashes, while some incidents of sexual violence were also reported. Approximately 9 of these incidents took place in Twic, while the majority are reported to have taken place in Tonj East, South and North.³⁵⁷

Below is a chronological overview of some security related incidents in Warrap in the period of 1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020:

- On 17 April 2019, unknown gunmen allegedly ambushed a vehicle on the outskirts of Ajakuach. As a result, 4 individuals were killed and 5 civilians were injured.³⁵⁸
- On 28 May 2019, Bul Nuer from Mayom County attacked locations in the Turalei area, resulting in 28 deaths and at least 20 injured.³⁵⁹

³⁴⁹ UNMISS, [South Sudan Map], February 2020, [url](#)

³⁵⁰ UN OCHA, Warrap State map, 12 December 2016, [url](#)

³⁵¹ ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#); UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), para. 48

³⁵² ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

³⁵³ ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#); NSC, Situation in South Sudan, 14 June 2019, [url](#), para. 26

³⁵⁴ The Apuk Dinka are part of the Dinka ethnic group and communities. Source: Pendle, N., Contesting the militarization of the places where they met: the landscapes of the western Nuer and Dinka (South Sudan), 2017, LSE (London School of Economics), [url](#), p. 6

³⁵⁵ The Bul Nuer is an ethnic group, which at 2018 was pro-government. Source: New Humanitarian (the), A who's who in South Sudan's splintering civil war, 12 April 2018, [url](#)

³⁵⁶ ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

³⁵⁷ ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

³⁵⁸ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 14 June 2019, [url](#), para. 26

³⁵⁹ UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), para. 29. For more information on the conflict in the border area between Twic (Warrap state) and Mayom (Unity state), see para. 63 of the same report.

- On 25 June 2019, in the greater Tonj area, fighting among the Muok, Yar and Apuk-Juwiir communities and the Thorny community reportedly resulted in at least 15 fatalities in Manyangok.³⁶⁰
- On 17 July 2019, renewed clashes in Thiik County among the subsections of Dinka (Rek), Jalwau, Thiik and Luanyjang resulted in at least 23 fatalities.³⁶¹
- In December 2019, a dispute between two communities in Tonj North county resulted in 11 fatalities and in the displacement of people from eight villages.³⁶²
- In January 2020, at least 102 people were killed and 137 others were injured in the states of Warrap and Lakes, according to the UNSC. In Warrap, incidents of revenge killings resulted in violence between various Dinka Rek sub-clans due to unresolved land disputes.³⁶³
- On 20 March 2020, cattle raiders attacked a camp in the county of Tonj South; the attacks resulted in at least 51 fatalities.³⁶⁴

Impact on population

In the period between 29 May and 27 August 2019, intercommunal violence was prominent in the greater Bahr el-Ghazal area. There were more than 70 fatalities due to incidents that took place across state borders, particularly between Unity and Warrap as well as between Warrap and Western Bahr el-Ghazal.³⁶⁵

According to the UNSC, between 28 August and 30 November 2019, the scale of communal conflict had overall decreased, although an increase in tensions was noted in Warrap related to pastoral movements towards grazing areas for the dry season.³⁶⁶

Sources reported the continued recruitment of children in Warrap state.³⁶⁷ Government forces³⁶⁸, as well as members of the SPLM-IO, continued to forcibly recruit men and boys through campaigns in Warrap³⁶⁹. Recruitment and use of children were systematically organized in Warrap also by local chiefs and county commissioners in order for the children to be used in the NSS and the SSPDF.³⁷⁰ In Tonj, local commissioners were reportedly extorting cattle from families, following orders from the SSPDF, in order to secure at least one family member for recruitment. If no men were available, boys were sought in their place.³⁷¹ In addition, county commissioners, following government orders, recruited children in Gogrial and in Twic, using also recruitment centres in Gogrial.³⁷²

³⁶⁰ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 10 September 2019, [url](#), para. 33

³⁶¹ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 10 September 2019, [url](#), para. 33

³⁶² UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 26 February 2020, [url](#), para. 27

³⁶³ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 26 February 2020, [url](#), para. 33

³⁶⁴ International Crisis Group, Tracking Conflict Worldwide, South Sudan, March 2020, n.d., [url](#); Radio Tamazuj, 55 killed in cattle raid in Warrap state, 24 March 2020, [url](#)

³⁶⁵ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 10 September 2019, [url](#), para. 33

³⁶⁶ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 11 December 2019, [url](#), para. 29

³⁶⁷ UNSC, Letter dated 20 November 2019 from the Panel of Experts on South Sudan addressed to the President of the Security Council, 22 November 2019, [url](#), p. 2; UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), p. 1

³⁶⁸ The government forces included the National Security Service and SSPDF Tiger Division, SSPDF Divisions 3 based in Warrap (Panachier) among other states, Division 4 (based in Rubkona in Unity), Division 5 (based in Girinty Barracks in Wau in Western Bahr el-Ghazal State) and Division 10. Source: UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), para. 46

³⁶⁹ UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), p. 1

³⁷⁰ UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), para. 48

³⁷¹ UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), para. 48

³⁷² UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), para. 6

The number of IDPs in Warrap state was 233 198 as of February 2020.³⁷³

6.8. Unity state

Unity state is located in the north of South Sudan.³⁷⁴ The state's capital is Bentiu.³⁷⁵

Actors

Main actors involved in the conflict in the state of Unity are the following:

- Government forces, including SSPDF³⁷⁶ and SSNPS³⁷⁷,
- Opposition forces, including SPLM-IO, SPLM-IO-Deng Gai³⁷⁸, and NSS³⁷⁹,
- Local non-government forces, including ethnic militias such as Bul Nuer Ethnic Militia, Dok Nuer³⁸⁰ Ethnic Militia, Jagei Nuer Ethnic Militia, and communal militias such as Panyijiar Communal Militia, Southern Liech Communal Militia, Western Lakes Communal Militia.³⁸¹

List of incidents

ACLED reported 24 incidents at the state of Unity, between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020. The majority of these incidents were reported to be attacks, while some incidents of abductions, armed clashes and sexual violence were also reported.³⁸²

Chronological overview of selected security related incidents in Unity in the period of 1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020:

- On 6 March 2019, two individuals were killed as a result of clashes between armed youth and members of the South Sudan People's Defence Forces stationed in Rubkway, Mayendit, in Unity State³⁸³.

Within the limits and time constraints of this query response, no specific information could be found in the consulted and used sources on another individual incidents.

For information on intercommunal violence between Unity and Warrap that took place in June 2019, please see the section on Warrap state.

Impact on population

During the reporting period 27 February and 28 May 2019, 19 incidents of conflict-related sexual violence involving 28 victims (including 10 children) were reported from South Sudan, including in

³⁷³ UNOCHA, South Sudan, Humanitarian snapshot February 2020, 11 March 2020, [url](#)

³⁷⁴ UNMISS, [South Sudan Map], February 2020, [url](#)

³⁷⁵ UNOCHA, South Sudan. Unity reference map, January 2020, [url](#)

³⁷⁶ ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

³⁷⁷ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 14 June 2019, [url](#), para. 61

³⁷⁸ ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

³⁷⁹ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 14 June 2019, [url](#), para. 61

³⁸⁰ Leer county, in the Unity state, is inhabited by '...major ethnic group, known as Dok -Nuer clan...'. Source: Coalition for Humanity South Sudan (CH), Conflict Dynamics in LeerCounty, South Sudan: Issues, Barriers and Opportunities Towards Conflict Transformation., November 2018, [url](#), p. 7

³⁸¹ ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

³⁸² ACLED, Data Export Tool, South Sudan 1 April 2019 – 30 March 2020, [url](#)

³⁸³ LCMT, Mayendit County, n.d., [url](#)

Unity. Ten of these incidents were attributed to the SSPDF, two to the SPLM-IO, two to the NSS, two to community-based militia and one to the SSNPS.³⁸⁴

According to the UNHRC, civilians in Unity state witnessed persistent fighting, displaying an upward trend in the months of April, June and August 2019. The fighting was characterized by an increase in the scale and severity of the violations and included abductions as well as enforced disappearances.³⁸⁵ Increasing road attacks, as well as the presence of large numbers of armed gunmen added to insecurity in Unity state in the period between 29 May and 27 August 2019.³⁸⁶ According to a November 2019 UNSC report, multiple allegations of ongoing child recruitment, forced recruitment and different forms of sexual and gender-based violence were reported in Unity state.³⁸⁷ Between 1 December 2019 and 15 February 2020, UNMISS documented at least 18 incidents of forced recruitment of civilians and alleged former fighters by the major warring parties in South Sudan, the majority in Unity. While alleged deserters were the target of such operations, the source noted that many civilians, including minors and some humanitarian personnel, were abducted for the purposes of such operations.³⁸⁸

The UNHRC reported in January 2020 that in Unity, boys who had lost or were separated from their parents due to the conflict joined the SSPDF or the SPLM-IO due to financial difficulties. The source noted that, after enlisting, it was difficult for them to be released and that children failing to follow orders received from 30 to 50 lashes.³⁸⁹

The UNSCR in its report on South Sudan for the period 1 December 2019 until 15 February 2020, stated that Unity state was one of the states where communal fighting, forced relocation, forceful recruitment and violent cattle raids were reported.³⁹⁰ The UNHRC reported in January 2020 that in the area of Mayom in Unity state, 'violent competition over pastoral resources escalated in localities where the rule of law was totally absent'.³⁹¹

The number of IDPs in Unity state was 247 614 as of February 2020.³⁹²

³⁸⁴ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 14 June 2019, [url](#), para. 61

³⁸⁵ UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), para. 75

³⁸⁶ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 10 September 2019, [url](#), para. 24

³⁸⁷ UNSC, Letter dated 20 November 2019 from the Panel of Experts on South Sudan addressed to the President of the Security Council, 22 November 2019, [url](#), paras. 40-41

³⁸⁸ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 26 February 2020, [url](#), para. 56

³⁸⁹ UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), paras. 10, 49, 53

³⁹⁰ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 26 February 2020, [url](#), para. 35

³⁹¹ UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), para. 58

³⁹² UNOCHA, South Sudan, Humanitarian snapshot February 2020, 11 March 2020, [url](#)



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