

**COMMUNITY-BASED
ASSESSMENT
OF REINTEGRATION AND
ABSORPTION CAPACITY
OF NORTHERN BAHR EL GHAZAL,
SOUTH SUD**



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Acronyms

CBA	Community Based Assessment
CBO	Community Based Organisation
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
PHCC	Primary Health Care Centre
PHCU	Primary Health Care Unit
PoH	Pocket of Hope
RRC	Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner
SSP	South Sudanese Pound

Executive Summary

Methodology and Objectives

This community-based assessment examines the integration status of displaced and returned households living in Northern Bahr el Ghazal (NBeG), Aweil Central, North, West and East counties, South Sudan and evaluates the area’s capacity to welcome additional returnees. It is one of four regional briefs in this series, of which the objectives are to evaluate the current degree of integration of displaced persons in the area, assess infrastructure and service quality and capacity to accommodate more people, and inform area-based planning by government actors, UNHCR and partners¹.

<p>Current status of integration</p> <p><i>To what extent have displaced persons currently living in NBeG achieved a level of sustainable reintegration? Where are the key gaps and needs?</i></p>	<p>Status and capacity of infrastructure and services</p> <p><i>What is the quality and capacity of healthcare, education, water points, safe spaces, and judicial infrastructure in NBeG?</i></p>	<p>Barriers and opportunities for future integration</p> <p><i>What service gaps exist, and how might these evolve if more returnees settle in NBeG? How could more arrivals impact community relations and resource availability?</i></p>
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The assessment employed a mixed-methods approach:

1. **Household surveys:** 820 household surveys targeting both host and displaced populations captured data on demographics, housing, livelihoods, access to basic services, safety, and psychosocial well-being.
2. **Infrastructure assessments:** Evaluations of 411 infrastructure points, including health facilities, schools, water points, markets, judicial infrastructures, and safe spaces, assessed their structural condition, alignment with minimum standards, service availability, current capacity and ability to accommodate potential arrivals.
3. **Focus groups, case studies, key informant interviews:** in-depth consultations with community leaders, hosts, refugee returnees, and local authorities explored community dynamics, reintegration barriers, and service gaps.

Analytical approaches employed include the Reintegration Sustainability Survey (RSS), which quantifies integration levels in different dimensions via composite scoring. Infrastructure was evaluated against defined minimum standards to confirm basic functionality and quality benchmarks, while absorption capacity calculations assessed the extent to which existing services could accommodate additional demand.

¹ The other briefs cover the areas of 1) Western Bahr el Ghazal (Raja county) 2) Northern Bahr el Ghazal (Aweil Central, West, East and North), 3) Eastern Equatoria (Magwi and Torit).

Integration Today

Shelter is a concern for refugees in NBeG, who often lack the resources to build adequate housing. While some returnees have received land allocations, the absence of materials and financial support limits their ability to construct proper shelters. Those without land allocations face even greater challenges, often living in makeshift conditions or overcrowded host households. Hosts generally report better housing access, however, a significant portion of both groups experiences substandard conditions.

Land disputes are a significant source of tension in the region. While 61% of host community members possess legal land ownership, only 31% of returnees hold formal land titles, with an additional 30% of returnees using land without formal tenure. In line with this, returnees are 18% more likely than hosts to require assistance in resolving land disputes and are 16% more likely to need help securing land titles.

Overall, perceptions of safety in NBeG are positive but isolated security challenges persist, particularly livestock theft and occasional cattle raids in border areas. Law enforcement is generally functional but under-resourced, with community policing and traditional leadership structures playing a key role in maintaining local security.

Material safety remains precarious, marked by acute food insecurity, limited livelihoods, and overcrowded shelter conditions. Returnees, in particular, face heightened vulnerabilities, arriving with few resources and relying heavily on host communities for support. Farming dominates as the main livelihood but is hindered by insufficient access to seeds, tools, and unpredictable environmental conditions such as flooding and drought. Many households report relying on negative coping mechanisms, including skipping meals and borrowing food. Access to adequate shelter remains limited, with returnees disproportionately living in makeshift or overcrowded conditions.

The Reintegration Sustainability Score (RSS), calculated across Economic, Social, and Safety dimensions, highlights significant disparities in reintegration outcomes among returnee groups. Returnees in their place of origin report the highest scores across all dimensions, indicating comparatively better reintegration outcomes. In contrast, returnees not in their area of origin face the greatest challenges, with lower economic, social, and safety scores reflecting difficulties in building stability in unfamiliar areas.

Infrastructure and Services Today

Healthcare facilities are present but strained. Access to essential medicines, such as antibiotics, is inconsistent, while specialized care, including maternal health and mental health services, is severely limited. Staffing remains low, especially for trained professionals, forcing facilities to rely on under qualified personnel. Costs of treatment and long travel distances further hinder access, particularly for returnees.

Enrolment rates are high at the primary level but decline at the secondary level, reflecting financial and infrastructure-related barriers. Schools across the region face significant resource shortages, with many lacking classrooms, toilets, and basic learning materials such as textbooks and desks. Overcrowding is a widespread challenge, compounded by a severe shortage of qualified teachers, many of whom remain unpaid or untrained. In areas like Nyalath and Baac, makeshift “under-tree” schools highlight the urgency of investing in permanent, functional facilities.

Water quality is generally fair but long wait times—often exceeding one hour—are common, particularly in high-density areas. Rural and underserved payams, such as Nyalath, face the greatest challenges, with limited water points forcing residents to rely on unsafe or distant alternatives. Without significant rehabilitation and expansion, the current system is unlikely to meet growing demand.

Law enforcement and judicial infrastructure are limited and poorly maintained, with facilities operating at reduced capacity due to staffing shortages and structural deterioration. Most police stations and courthouses lack basic equipment and security measures, while formal legal processes are inaccessible for many, forcing reliance on traditional dispute-resolution systems.

Safe spaces for vulnerable populations, particularly women and children, are extremely limited, poorly equipped, and largely unknown to the broader community.

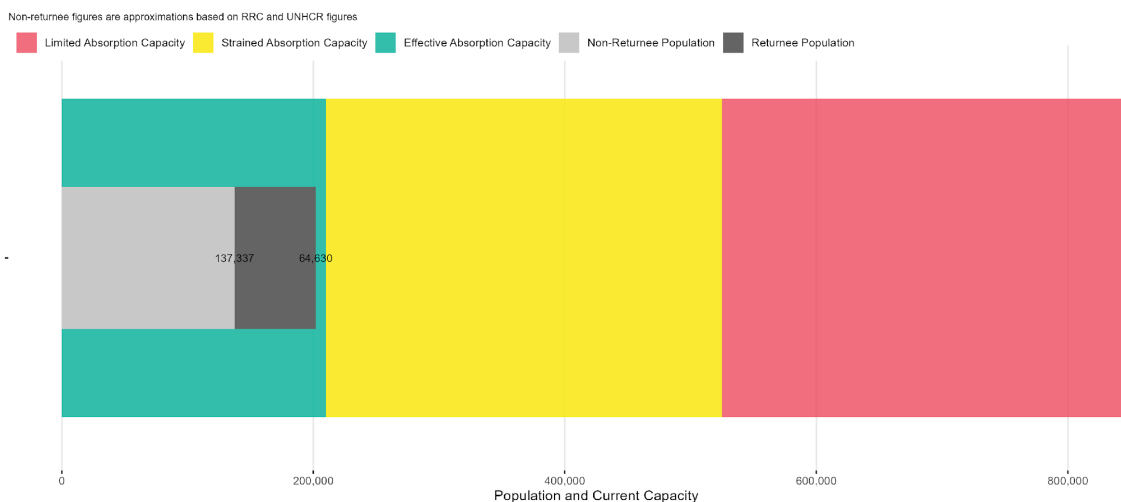
Integration Tomorrow

Despite significant challenges, both returnees and host community members express a strong intention to remain permanently in their current locations. However, concerns about the region’s ability to absorb additional populations persist. The community identifies critical priorities for improvement, including access to housing, healthcare, education, and land. Addressing these gaps is seen as essential to ensuring long-term reintegration and supporting population growth.

Service Capacity Absorption

The healthcare system in the area shows significant disparities in its ability to absorb additional populations. While regions like Gomjuer East and Baac remain within manageable service limits, others, such as Malual North and Nyalath, have already exceeded maximum capacity thresholds. Nyalath, in particular, lacks a single functioning facility that meets minimum quality standards. Across the assessed locations, 28 of the 40 healthcare facilities failed to meet basic standards due to inadequate water access, limited medicine stocks, and poor infrastructure.

Figure 23 Aggregated health absorption capacity



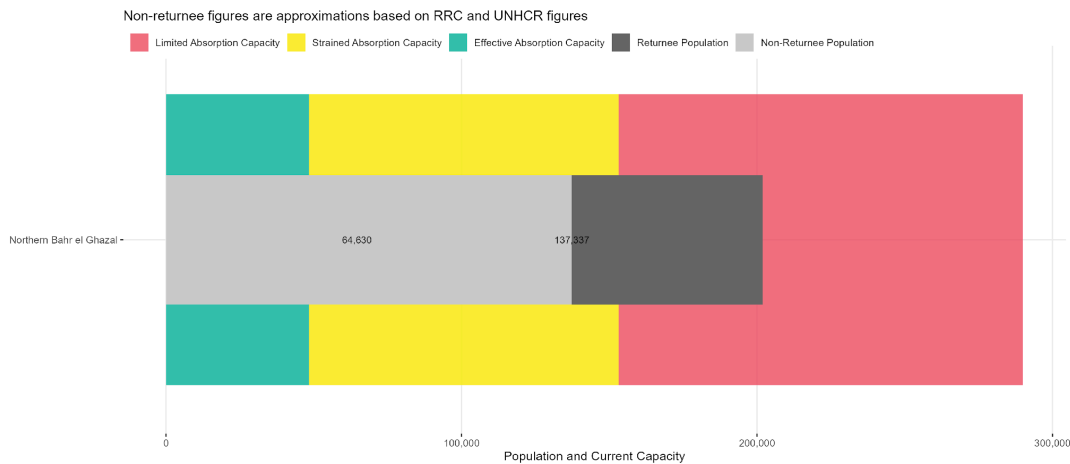
Education infrastructure is stretched to its limits, with schools in Nyalath operating beyond maximum capacity. Across the region, 24 out of 85 facilities fail to meet minimum standards, largely due to the absence of toilets and poor building conditions. Teacher shortages remain a critical bottleneck.

Figure 27 Aggregated education absorption capacity



Water infrastructure is at near-maximum capacity, with systems already struggling to meet current survival-level needs (2.5L per person/day). Although 25 non-functional water points could be refurbished to alleviate some pressure, this alone will not close the existing gap.

Figure 31 Aggregated water absorption capacity



Recommendations

Enhanced access to water: Insufficient water infrastructure in NBeG leads to long queues and disputes for hosts and returnees. Expanding infrastructure with new boreholes in areas like Wedweil West and Apada is essential. To meet full water needs across the region (15L per person per day) would require 614 new water points, while operating at a strained capacity (4.5L per person per day) would need 60 – which could partially be achieved by refurbishing the 25 defunct water points.

Development actors should also support local water management committees to ensure borehole maintenance.

Improved Educational Infrastructure: Enhancing school quality could expand capacity by 31,656 students without additional teachers. However, overcrowding, under-resourced schools, unpaid teachers, and a lack of permanent structures—especially in Apada and Warawar—remain major challenges. Addressing teacher shortages and delayed salaries requires collaboration with local authorities. Providing essential materials and introducing school feeding programs can boost attendance and learning outcomes. A regional approach is needed, with Nyalath particularly underserved, requiring 86 more teachers and additional schools to meet capacity standards.

Increasing Access to Healthcare: Despite an overall effective absorption rate, regional disparities persist. In Nyalath payam, no facilities meet minimum standards, leaving 41,000 people without local healthcare. Refurbishing two centres with water access, toilets, and essential medicines would enable this location to meet a strained capacity, but three additional health centres are needed for ideal service. Across the region, healthcare quality is poor, with facilities scoring under 50% on key indicators like equipment, medicines, service variety, and female medical staff. To improve healthcare in Northern Bahr el Ghazal, prioritising equipment distribution and expanding specialized care is essential.

Introduction

Northern Bahr el Ghazal (NBeG), located in the northwest of South Sudan, is defined by its agro-pastoral economy, with livelihoods centered on cattle rearing, farming, and casual labor. However, frequent flooding often devastates crops, intensifying economic vulnerability. Local markets rely heavily on imports from Sudan. Since the escalation of conflict in Sudan, NBeG has witnessed a steady influx of returnees, particularly in Aweil East and North, where two official border crossing points facilitate their arrival. Many returnees were previously residing in Sudan and are now dispersed across villages in the region. A small number have also returned there from Uganda, Kenya, and Ethiopia. NBeG also serves as a transit hub for individuals passing through on their way to Warrap and other regions, underscoring the area's strategic importance in managing displacement.

The Aweil regions show a significant returnee presence. The total population across these areas is 583,094, according to WorldPop, while RRC reports indicate 184,158 returnees, representing 32% of the population.²

Figure 1 NBeG population profile / estimate

Number of returnees	184,158 ³
Total population	583,094 ⁴
Proportion of returnee population	32%

The influx of returnees has introduced new pressures on local infrastructure and services, which were already limited in their ability to meet existing needs. **In this context, this assessment brief evaluates the well-being of those currently living in NBeG, while examining the region's capacity to absorb additional populations.**

This brief draws on fieldwork conducted in five payams and one urban center. Locations were selected based on returnee numbers, ethnic diversity, and accessibility. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, including over 820 household surveys, 10 focus group discussions, 10 case studies, and key informant interviews conducted across:

- Aweil Central (Aweil Town and Nyalath Payam)
- Aweil East (Baac Payam)
- Aweil West (Guemjer East Payam)
- Aweil North (Malual North Payam)

Additionally, the team surveyed 411 infrastructures, including 86 education facilities, 40 health facilities, 27 law enforcement and judicial facilities, 56 markets, 3 safe spaces, 3 public buildings, and 196 water points.

² WorldPop Data: Selected for total population figures due to its transparent methodology, which includes geospatial modeling and demographic projections. However, other sources (e.g., OCHA, South Sudan Statistical Office) present alternative figures that may vary. Returnee Figures: Drawn primarily from RRC data, complemented by UNHCR estimates where available. Both sources have limitations, including potential undercounting or double-counting, given the fluidity of displacement and return.

³ Cumulative RRC refugee returnee figure from May 2023 to January 2024

⁴ Latest WorldPop Raja county population figures

For a detailed methodology and sample description, please refer to the project website ([here](#)). The site also features the full toolkit used, along with a clickable map that provides photos and in-depth descriptions of all individual infrastructure points profiled. Additionally, you can access anonymized data and other project resources directly from the site

This brief begins by assessing the current state of returnee integration, considering physical, material, and psychosocial safety dimensions. The second section evaluates the state of service provision today, identifying strengths and gaps across key sectors. The brief then explores the potential impacts of additional population inflows on well-being and integration, followed by an analysis of the absorption capacity of different services and infrastructures. Finally, the report concludes with recommendations to address identified gaps.

Figure 2 OCHA Northern Bahr el Ghazal reference map, 2020

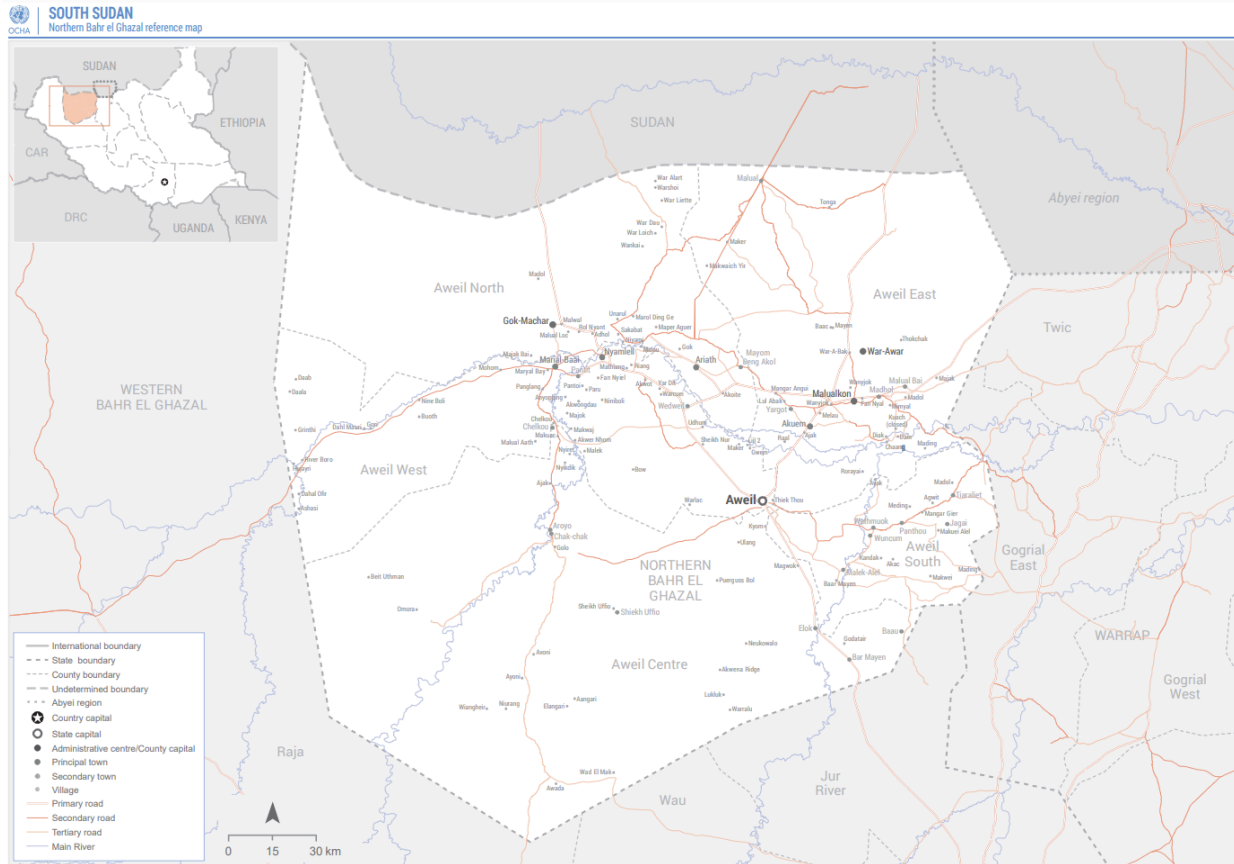


Figure SEQ Figure 1* ARABIC 3 An interview taking place in Baac payam



Integration today

The analysis of data from Aweil and the surrounding areas reveals insights into the lived experiences of host community members, returnees and other displaced persons.⁵ The analysis in this chapter follows the dimensions of integration outlined in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) framework, which emphasizes three key dimensions critical to sustainable reintegration: physical safety, material safety, and psychosocial safety.

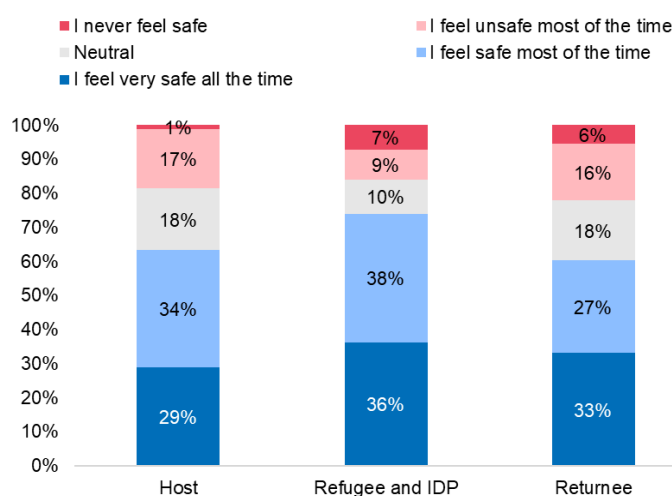
The sample profile of the household survey, which includes demographic, displacement, and return dynamics for the area, is detailed in the annex, offering insights into the characteristics of the surveyed population, their reasons for return, and intentions for onward movement.

Physical safety

Perceived physical safety. The area appears to be generally stable, with peaceful coexistence reported between hosts, returnees, IDPs, and refugees across most areas. Many returnees, particularly those fleeing violence and looting in Sudan, describe relief at being able to rebuild their lives in a more secure environment. A host from Riang Miir in Malual North Payam shared, *“The security here is very good; we don’t have any problems, even for IDPs, refugees, and returnees to settle, there is no problem.”* Survey findings reinforce this perception of stability: only 9% of respondents reported witnessing or experiencing tribal tensions, and one in four had witnessed or experienced conflicts between host communities and displaced persons.

Despite the overall sense of security, some concerns persist. Theft, particularly livestock theft, was noted as a recurring issue. A local administrator in Nyalath Payam stated, *“There’s widespread theft of goats, but we don’t know who steals them. There is a need for more police in the area.”* In border areas, occasional cattle raids by Arab militias were reported, though these incidents are infrequent. Land disputes also remain a notable source of potential insecurity, with 50% of respondents indicating that such disputes could significantly increase security concerns. A majority of survey respondents feel generally safe, but returnees are somewhat less likely to do so than the other categories.

Figure 4 Perceived physical safety



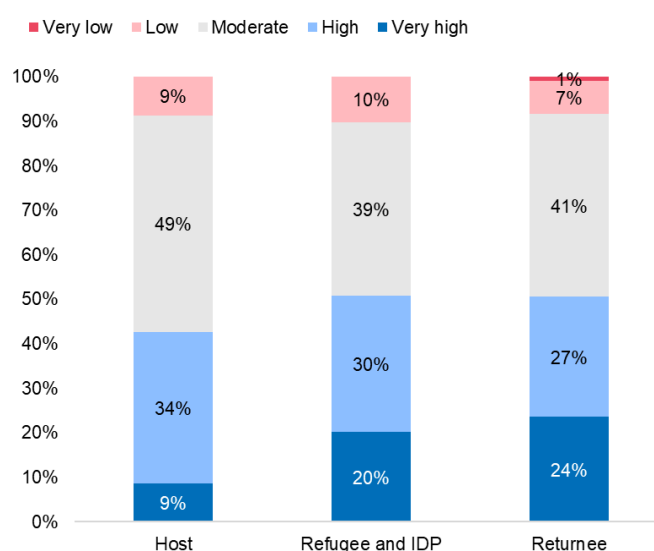
⁵ Returnees in this instance refers to both refugee returnees and internally displaced returnees. IDPs and refugees are combined in an 'other displaced groups' category due to the relatively small sample of respondents in this category. Those who did not self-identify as any of the above categories also contribute to the 'other' category.

Law enforcement adequacy. Local authorities, including community leaders and police, play a key role in maintaining security. Community policing was frequently highlighted as an effective tool for maintaining security, with one host in Warawar, Baac Payam noting, *“The community police move everywhere to make sure the people within Warawar are safe”*

Law enforcement is perceived as generally adequate. Returnees report the highest satisfaction, with 28% considering it “definitely adequate” compared to only 12% of host community members.

Belonging and trust. Trust and community ties appear to be strong in the assessed area, with hosts and returnees alike expressing a sense of solidarity. As one host in Baac Payam explained, *“We share what we have. They [the returnees] are our people. We trust them, and they trust us.”* Similarly, a returnee emphasized the welcoming nature of their community: *“When we arrived, our hosts welcomed us. We are like family here.”* Returnees reported the highest levels of “very high” trust (24%).

Figure 5 Level of trust in other people living in the community

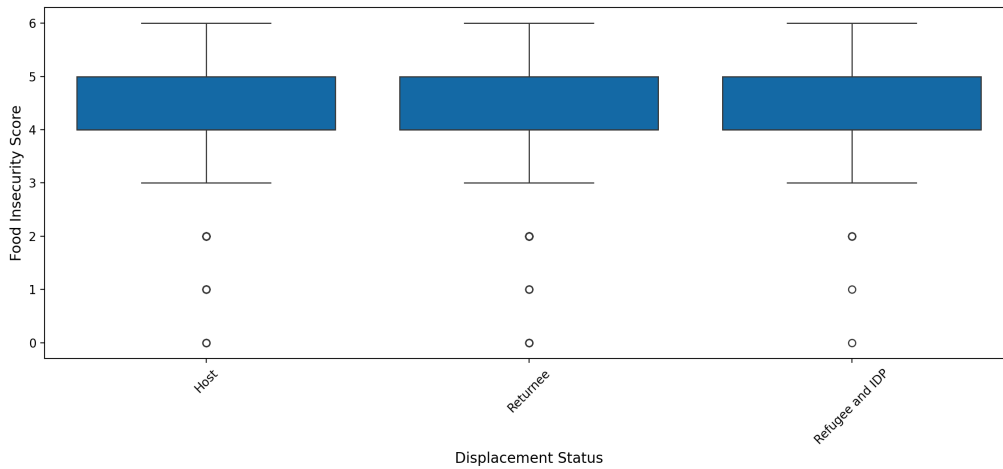


Social participation and community integration in NBeG are moderate overall but vary by displacement status. Returnees and other displaced groups report lower participation in formal social activities, with 20–30% stating they do not engage—compared to hosts, who demonstrate more consistent involvement. However, despite differences in formal participation, many respondents described strong informal community bonds and a culture of mutual support. As one woman in Udhaba explained, *“We farm together, pray together, and help each other. This is how we survive.”*

Material safety

Food insecurity and coping strategies. Food insecurity is a critical challenge in the area, with returnees reporting slightly higher food insecurity scores (4.37) compared to hosts (4.27) and IDPs/refugees (4.35). The influx of returnees has heightened pressure on already limited food resources. Many returnees arrived with little to no belongings, leaving them in particularly vulnerable conditions. One returnee explained, *“I have never had enough food to eat, water, and shelter since arriving here.”* A community leader in Maper Akot noted, *“The returnees came empty-handed, with no food, shelter, or health services. The host community is under pressure to provide necessary services.”*

Figure 6 Food insecurity scores by displacement status



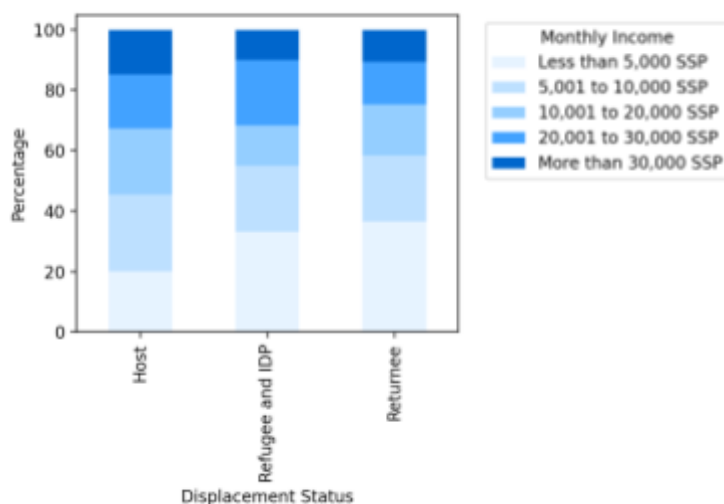
Negative coping strategies to address food insecurity are prevalent:

- Skipping meals is widespread, affecting 63% of hosts and 45% of returnees.
- Borrowing food is less common, with 33% of returnees and 32% of hosts relying on this strategy.

Food aid access in the area is notably low across all groups, with refugees/IDPs receiving the most assistance (20%) compared to returnees (6%) and host communities (3%).

Livelihoods and land. Livelihoods in the area are predominantly based on farming and casual labor, Farming remains the primary source of income for most households, yet access to essential inputs like seeds and tools is a major challenge, especially for returnees (24%). Flooding and drought further exacerbate these difficulties, with a third of returnees citing insufficient rainfall as a critical barrier. A returnee in Udhaba explained, *“We can grow crops because it is the main activity here for living. But access to seeds is challenging as some cannot access quality seeds.”* Opportunities for diversification beyond farming are limited, particularly for returnees who lack start-up capital to begin small businesses. *“Some returnees have business skills but no starting-up money and no piece of land in the market,”* noted a host from Warawar.

Income. Income insecurity is a persistent issue, with most households earning less than 10,000 SSP per month. As one returnee in Maper shared, *“I am washing plates in a restaurant for my children to get leftover food.”* Returnees and IDPs/refugees report slightly higher levels of income security (32% and 37%, respectively) compared to hosts (30%), though all groups report substantial income fluctuations.



Economic satisfaction remains low across all groups. Nearly half of hosts (43%) and returnees (40%) report being "Not Satisfied At All" with their economic situation. Additionally, 79% of hosts and 82% of returnees are unable to borrow money, indicating limited access to credit. A host in Warawar noted, *"We are trying our best, but without money, there is little we can do to improve our lives."*

Figure SEQ Figure * ARABIC 8 Maper Akot market, Aweil Central county



Markets in Northern Bahr el Ghazal

Within the infrastructure assessment, 56 unique marketplaces were identified throughout Aweil Central, Aweil West, Aweil North and Aweil East counties. 91% of these marketplaces sell a mixture of food products and NFIs (non-food items), with 21% of marketplaces also facilitating livestock sales. At the time of assessment 86% of these marketplaces had stocks of staple cereals, with a majority of marketplaces having at least limited stocks of legumes, fruit and meat or fish. While markets in NBeG sell a diverse range of goods, availability is an issue, with 23% of markets surveyed reporting that there is a current scarcity of staple cereals and 64% reporting scarcity of other food products. Of all the assessed regions, markets in Aweil are the least impacted in the wet season, with respondents in 70% of assessed markets reporting that availability of goods does not change between the wet and dry seasons. However, while availability does not change, price does, with 80% of traders reporting that prices increase due to wet season conditions. Traders identified a number of challenges in the past year, primarily:

- **Poor road conditions** in the wet season (73% of traders)
- **Limited availability of goods in source markets** (59% of traders), and;
- **Limited access to foreign currency** (55%), highlighting the debilitating impact of the depreciation of the SSP and its impacts on the price of imported goods.

The three primary needs identified by respondents in marketplaces in Northern Bahr el Ghazal were sanitation facilities (82%), improved infrastructure (77%) and promotion of the market's services (57%)

Shelter. The shelter situation in NBeG is a concern, particularly for returnees, who often lack the resources to build adequate housing. While some returnees have received land allocations, the absence of materials and financial support limits their ability to construct proper shelters. *"We have provided pieces of land for them to settle. However, they lack building materials and money to build houses,"* explained a host in Udhaba Boma. Those without land allocations face even greater challenges, often living in makeshift conditions or overcrowded host households. Hosts generally report better housing access, with 44% rating their housing as "Good," compared to only 35% of returnees. However, a significant portion of both groups experiences substandard conditions. A female returnee in Maper highlighted, *"Buying a plot of land is becoming so difficult for me to manage, as well as renting a house since I don't have monthly income."*

Legal safety

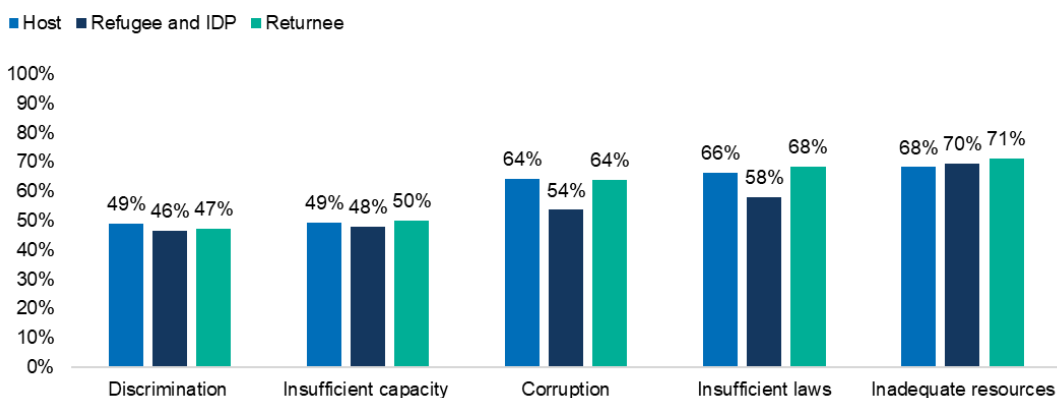
Document possession in the area is relatively low, with less than a third of interviewed residents holding national ID. Birth certificates are slightly more common, with 55% of interviewed hosts and 48% of returnees holding one. Land disputes are a significant source of tension in the region. While 61% of host community members possess legal land ownership, only 31% of returnees hold formal land titles, with an additional 30% of returnees using land without formal tenure. In line with this, returnees are 18% more likely than hosts to require assistance in resolving land disputes and are 16% more likely to need help securing land titles. Though the majority of returnees have not faced land disputes since their return, 19% have encountered such conflicts. The most common issues are related to ownership claims (56%) and land being appropriated by influential individuals or groups (14%).

In **conflict resolution**, informal methods are the primary means of addressing disputes across all groups. Chiefs, elders, and community leaders are the first points of contact, with 68% of returnees and 72% of hosts favoring these traditional mechanisms. A paramount chief from Maper Akot explained the critical role of customary leaders: *"Most disputes are resolved by the chiefs and community leaders, while formal courts are rarely accessed because they are far and costly."* Formal legal services are accessed primarily for more complex disputes, but the process is often hindered by

logistical and financial barriers. Among hosts, chiefs are the most trusted figures (29%), while returnees are more likely to seek assistance from humanitarian organizations or NGOs when disputes escalate beyond community mechanisms. One female returnee in Baac Payam noted, *"When there is a problem, we try to resolve it within the community first. Only when we fail, we go to the NGOs for help."*

Perceived barriers to public governance are systemic. Both hosts (68%) and returnees (71%) cite a lack of funding for public services as the primary challenge. Corruption is also a significant issue, affecting 64% of both groups according to survey respondents. Weak legal frameworks and inadequate law enforcement exacerbate these problems, leaving many displaced individuals underserved. Physical access to governance services is another major issue, particularly for returnees, many of whom settle in remote or hard-to-reach areas.

Figure 9 Perceived barriers to effective governance



Local authorities receive poor quality ratings across all groups, reflecting limited capacity to address community needs. Hosts rate local governance at 2.3 out of 5 on average, while returnees rate it slightly lower, at 2.1. Key informants highlighted the challenges faced by local authorities, including understaffing, inadequate training, and a lack of financial resources. A deputy director of administration in Aweil RRC stated, *"Our capacity is stretched thin; we can only provide minimal support to returnees and displaced people."*

Naida’s return to Mapper

"Coming to Mapper was not my choice, but it was my only option," shares Naida, a middle-aged returnee who recently arrived in South Sudan. Displaced by the war in Sudan, she recounts her journey to Mapper Payam.

When conflict erupted in Khartoum in April 2023, Naida and her family were thrust into turmoil. Without the resources to leave, they endured months of instability until May 2024, when the South Sudanese government facilitated transportation to safety.

Travelling by bus to Malakal and then by air to Aweil, she recalls the journey: *"We faced many problems—no food, no safe drinking water, and no shelter. But there was no other way."* Once in Aweil, she followed the crowd to Mapper Payam, a decision driven by uncertainty rather than intent.

The transition to life in Mapper has been filled with challenges. *“I don’t have land here,”* she says, explaining that many returnees struggle to find space to settle. Unlike the host community, which has established rights to land and resources, returnees often rely on temporary accommodations offered by relatives or the generosity of local residents. *“One of the hosts gave us a house, but I know I can’t stay forever,”* she admits. Without a permanent home, the process of rebuilding her life remains uncertain.

Access to basic services is another significant hurdle. Food is scarce, and the lack of documents prevents her from securing employment or starting a business. *“I am washing plates in a restaurant so my children can eat the leftover food,”* she shares. The limited availability of water has led to daily disputes at overcrowded water points, a stark reminder of the limited resources in the area. Despite these difficulties, she acknowledges the relative safety of Mapper: *“There is no serious insecurity here, but theft is common, and you can’t leave your house unattended.”*

Reintegration into the community has been both a challenge and an opportunity. While some hosts welcome returnees and provide support, others view them as a burden. *“There are hosts who say we should go back to Sudan,”* she explains, highlighting the mixed reception. Yet, interactions such as shared farming and participation in church activities foster connections and a sense of belonging.

For Naida, the barriers to reintegration extend beyond immediate needs. The absence of land ownership undermines her ability to establish a stable future for her family. *“Even if I had money, I wouldn’t be able to send my children to school while living in someone else’s house,”* she says. The promise of land in Bar Nyiwiny, a remote area far from essential services, offers little solace: *“There is no water, no schools, no health facilities there.”*

Despite the challenges, she holds onto a vision of what reintegration could look like with the right support. She calls for coordinated efforts from the government and NGOs to address critical gaps: *“We need clean water, schools, health centers, and agricultural tools to start our livelihoods.”* With these resources, she believes Mapper could become a place where returnees and the host community thrive together.

Overall state of reintegration today : RSS score analysis

The Reintegration Sustainability Score was calculated by mapping survey responses to a standardized scoring system across three key dimensions: Economic, Social, and Safety. These are assessed in the following sub-section for different subsets of returnees present in our sample. (We calculate RSS scores only for returnees, meaning IDPs currently displaced are not included here while IDPs who have returned to their location of origin are)

The Reintegration Sustainability Survey Scoring System

The **Reintegration Sustainability Survey (RSS)**, developed by Samuel Hall and IOM in 2017, assesses the sustainability of reintegration across three key dimensions:

- **Economic:** Measures food security, employment access, and financial stability.
- **Social:** Evaluates access to housing, healthcare, and education to gauge community integration.
- **Psychosocial:** Assesses subjective well-being, including feelings of safety, community belonging, and support networks.

Weighting and Scoring

- Indicators within each dimension are weighted to reflect their importance
- Responses are scored on a 0–1 scale, where 1 indicates optimal reintegration and 0 reflects significant barriers.

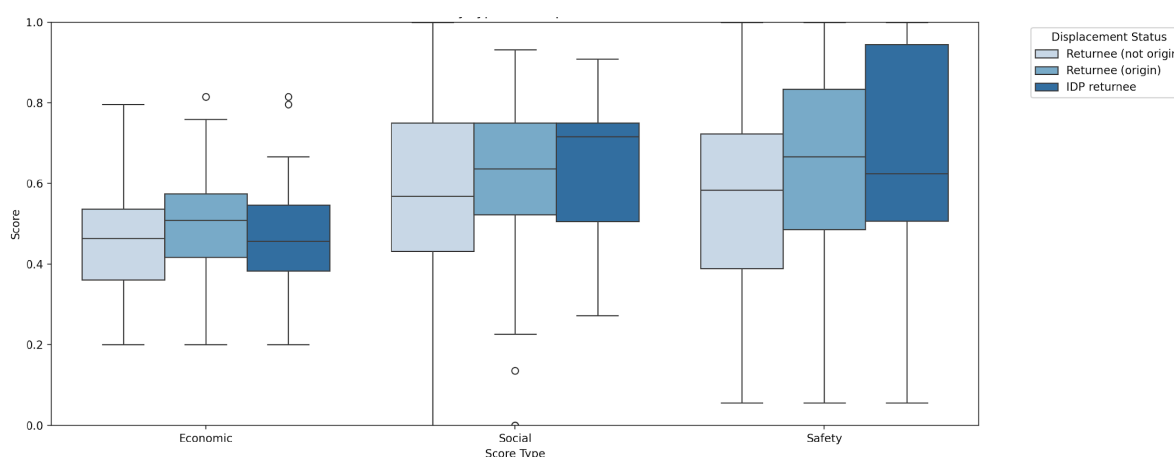
Composite Scoring

- Weighted scores for individual indicators are aggregated to calculate dimension scores.
- Dimension scores are combined, using compound weights, to produce an overall RSS score.

The RSS provides a robust, multidimensional tool to guide evidence-based decisions, helping identify barriers to reintegration and evaluate program impact. Please refer to the toolkit for the full question set and calculation code.

The RSS scores for NBeG reveal that returnees in origin have the highest scores across all dimensions (Economic, Social, and Safety), indicating better reintegration outcomes compared to other groups. Returnees not in origin consistently show the lowest scores, highlighting the challenges they face in economic stability, social integration, and safety. IDP returnees, while having the highest Safety scores, exhibit the most variability, likely due to their smaller sample size. Economic scores are generally lower across all groups, suggesting a common area of struggle in reintegration efforts.

Figure 10 RSS scores by displacement status (returnees only)

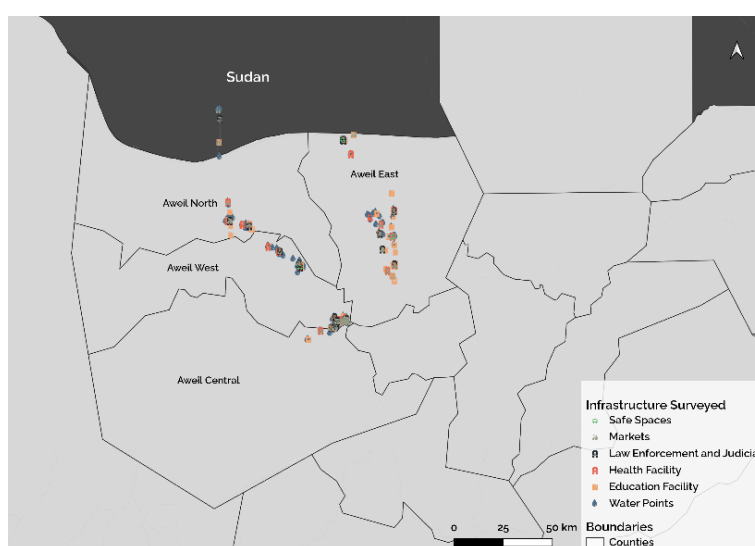


Regression analysis reveals small but significant effects of education, age, and gender on integration scores. Among these, education has the most notable association, particularly with safety perceptions, where higher education levels show a modest but consistent link to improved scores. This suggests that education may play a role in fostering awareness and strategies for coping with safety challenges, even if the effect size remains limited. By contrast, age and gender show no meaningful effects across any dimensions, with coefficients close to zero and no statistical significance. These results indicate that well-being outcomes in NBeG are not strongly influenced by demographic factors such as age or gender, pointing instead to other structural or contextual determinants.

Infrastructure and services today

This section provides a **diagnostic assessment of the current state of key services and infrastructure** in the visited locations. By examining education, healthcare, water access, law enforcement and judicial systems, we aim to evaluate both their functionality and accessibility, their quality today and their ability to cater to increased demand in the future.

Figure SEQ Figure * ARABIC 11 Assessed facility in NBeG



Infrastructure Type	Number Surveyed
Education Facilities	86
Health Facilities	40
Law Enforcement and Judicial Facilities	27
Markets	56
Safe Spaces	3
Water Points	196

Please refer to the [infrastructure dashboard](#) for a detailed map and granular view of all assessed facilities.

Gauging the quality of building infrastructure

In this assessment, the condition of building infrastructure was evaluated by assessors with the following criteria:

- **Excellent:** The building infrastructure is in pristine condition, with no visible signs of wear or damage. It is well-maintained, structurally sound, and fully functional.
- **Good:** The building infrastructure is in good condition overall, with minor signs of wear or aging. Cosmetic imperfections or minor maintenance issues may exist, but they do not significantly impact functionality.
- **Average:** The building infrastructure is functional but shows noticeable signs of wear, aging, or deterioration. Visible cracks, leaks, or structural issues may be present but do not pose immediate safety risks.
- **Bad:** The building infrastructure is in poor condition, with significant signs of wear, damage, or neglect. Structural deficiencies, safety hazards, or extensive maintenance issues may affect functionality and safety.
- **Very Bad:** The building infrastructure is in very poor condition, with severe damage, decay, or disrepair. Multiple safety hazards, structural weaknesses, or critical maintenance issues render the facility unsafe or unusable.
- **Dangerous:** The building infrastructure poses an immediate threat to safety and well-being. Serious structural defects, safety hazards, or environmental risks require urgent attention to prevent harm or injury.

Health

Accessibility and service utilisation by the local population. Based on the household survey data, in NGeB, Primary Health Care Centers (PHCCs) are the most utilized health facilities, with 50% of returnees and 48% of hosts relying on these facilities. Government hospitals are the second most frequented, likely at least partly for cost-related reasons. Most facilities offer consultations (71%), immunizations/vaccinations (60%), and maternal and child health services (56%). More specialised care, such as mental health support, surgical procedures, and dental services, remains scarce, with availability reported below 20% of survey respondents.

Perceptions of healthcare quality vary, with nearly 50% of hosts rating services as low or very low, compared to 30% among returnees and other displaced populations. Hosts report particular concerns over the poor availability of medical supplies and longer waiting times. The referral rate stands at 48%.

Key barriers to healthcare according to the surveyed households include:

- Cost of treatment (66%)
- Insufficient medical supplies (60%)
- Distance to facilities (50%)
- Long waiting times (46%)
- Lack of transportation (41%)

One host emphasized: *“We have only one Primary Health Care Unit, and this is only for children. Also, there are not enough drugs and medical staff.”* (Host, Male, Baac Payam, Warawar).

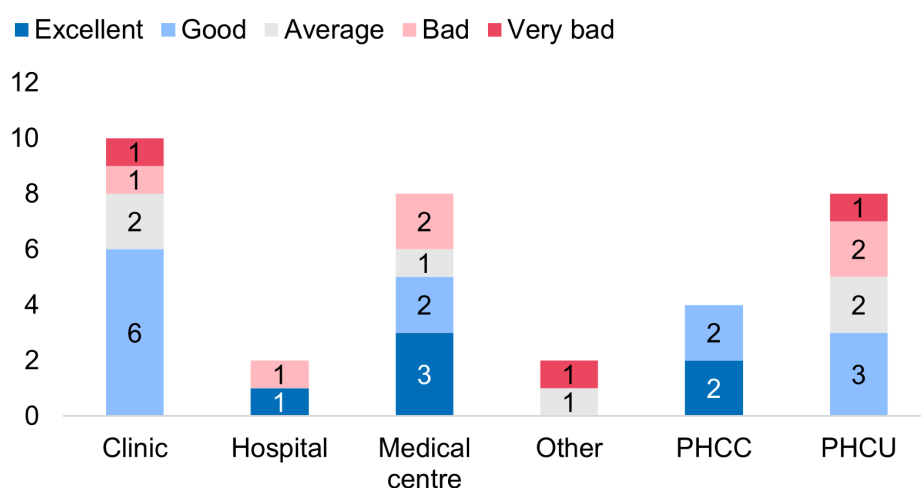
Infrastructure assessment. The infrastructure assessment profiled 40 healthcare facilities across Aweil and the surrounding areas, including 21 Primary Health Care Units (PHCUs), 15 Primary Health

Care Centers (PHCCs), and 2 state-level hospitals. These facilities vary in size and capacity, ranging from smaller centers like Lighthouse Medical Center and Luak Koc Medical Center to larger institutions such as Aweil State Hospital. Management of these facilities is diverse, with government authorities overseeing the majority, private entities operating 19 of the profiled facilities, and NGOs supporting six.

Condition. While a significant number of facilities were assessed to be in good condition, others, particularly in rural areas, are in poor or very poor condition, highlighting disparities in resource allocation and maintenance.

- Water access: 30 out of 40 facilities have access.
- Electricity access: 22 facilities have power, though outages are common.

Figure 12 Condition of assessed health facilities



Equipment and medicine availability also differ. Hospitals maintain stocks of antimalarials and antibiotics, ensuring robust coverage for basic and emergency care. However, critical gaps exist in specialised treatments, including antituberculosis drugs, antiretrovirals, and anesthetics, limiting their capacity to address more complex medical needs. PHCCs follow a similar pattern, with coverage of basic medicines but insufficient stocks of advanced treatments needed for more severe cases. Primary Health Care Units (PHCUs), which are the most numerous and accessible facilities for rural communities, display the availability of common medicines such as anti-malarials and antibiotics. However, they face substantial challenges in providing specialized treatments.

Highlighting the gaps, a respondent noted: *“The health facility we have has no medicines, and there are no other departments like a delivery ward.”* (Host, Male, Warawar). While private clinics offer additional services, their costs often make them inaccessible to both hosts and returnees, exacerbating disparities in care.

Hospitals offer the most comprehensive services, including maternal health, vaccinations, emergency care, and surgical procedures, while PHCCs focus on emergency and maternal health services. PHCUs primarily provide outpatient care and vaccinations, with limited capacity for specialized treatments. The availability of mental health and psychosocial support is almost entirely absent in NBeG. Despite increasing recognition of the need for these services, there are no organizations providing dedicated mental health support in the region. As one Boma Administrator in Apada noted: *“Mental health support is lacking. There is no organization providing psychosocial support.”*

Capacity and staffing. NBeG’s healthcare infrastructure demonstrates significant disparities in capacity and staffing across different facility types. The state hospital, the largest facility in the region, has the highest capacity, with 1,550 beds and the ability to treat 550 patients per day. The hospital’s staffing pool, which includes 20 midwives, highlights a strong focus on maternal health services, with a gender distribution skewed towards females (185 female staff compared to 63 males). Primary Healthcare Units face significant limitations. With only eight beds and an average daily patient load of 679, PHCUs primarily function as outpatient facilities. Medical centers and clinics also have minimal staffing, which limits their service capacity.

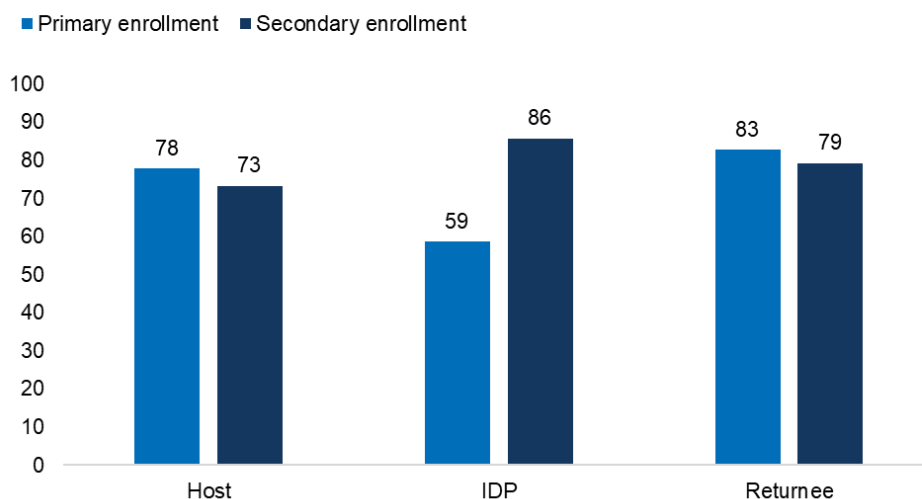
Figure 13 Fox health facility, Nyalath Payam



Education

Accessibility and service utilisation by the local population. Based on household survey data, enrolment rates differ across displacement groups. Returnees demonstrate 83% participation in primary education but slightly lower engagement at the secondary level, suggesting some drop-off as students advance. Feeding programs are sparse, with only 17% of schools providing regular meals, which may exacerbate hunger-related absenteeism.

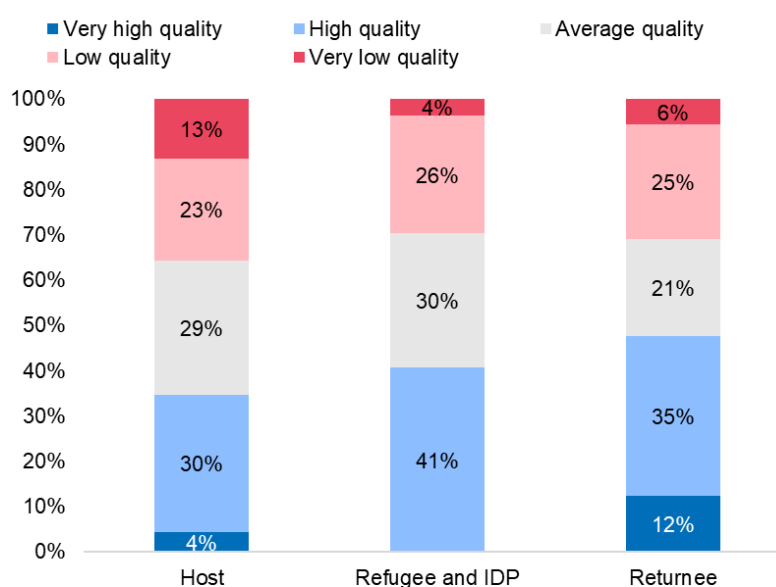
Figure 14 Primary and secondary enrolment percentages



The **quality** of education in NBeG is generally perceived as positive, with returnees expressing the highest satisfaction. However, significant gaps in infrastructure and resources hinder consistent delivery. Survey respondents note that many schools lack formal classrooms, learning materials, and

even basic amenities. As a Payam Chief from Warawar noted, "*The few schools we have here are not of good quality; they are under tree schools without even benches for students.*" The survey respondents rated secondary schools better in terms of infrastructure conditions, with 83% rated as "good," compared to 42% of primary schools. Close to one school in ten classified as "dangerous," highlighting critical areas for urgent intervention.

Figure 15 Perceived quality of education



Financial constraints remain the primary obstacle for education in the region, with median expenses ranging from 20,000 SSP to 25,000 SSP. Proximity to schools is another critical challenge, particularly for returnees.

Infrastructure assessment.

The education infrastructure profiled for this assessment in NBeG includes 86 schools, with the Government (Ministry of Education) being the primary administrator, followed by Faith-Based Organizations and private entities.

Condition. Based on the infrastructure assessments, a significant portion of facilities (22%) face serious infrastructure challenges. Only a handful of schools have access to electricity, and a quarter lacks water access. Handwashing facilities are present in four schools out of ten. A host from Udhaba Boma described the dire conditions: "*The school we have is just a piece of land. Pupils are taught under trees, and it's difficult during the rain or extreme sun heat. The teachers have run away because they have not been paid salaries for nine months.*"

Equipment. Libraries and playgrounds are rare, limiting academic enrichment and recreation opportunities. School feeding programs, critical for addressing hunger and improving attendance, are largely absent. Administrators highlight the urgent need for learning materials, improved infrastructure such as classrooms and hygiene facilities, and comprehensive feeding programs to support student well-being.

Size and attendance. Primary schools in the area exhibit significant variation in size, with most (34 out of 71) accommodating 100-500 students. Notably, 15 primary schools house over 500 students

each. Enrollment in primary schools is on an upward trajectory, with approximately 70% reporting increasing student numbers. Secondary schools are generally smaller, with most facilities serving 50-100 students. However, enrollment is also rising, with about 80% of secondary schools reporting growth. 77% of schools have displaced students, with displaced persons constituting around 18% of the student population. On average, primary schools have 7.7 classrooms per institution, compared to 6.7 in secondary schools.

School Type	Average number of buildings	Average number of Classrooms	Most common class size
Primary school	3.2	7.7	25-50
Secondary school	3.5	6.7	25-50

Teacher qualifications. Teacher qualifications in the area vary widely between primary and secondary schools. Secondary schools employ a higher proportion of teachers with bachelor’s degrees (58.3%), whereas primary schools rely more on staff with high school diplomas and teaching certificates. Despite 87% of schools employing qualified teachers, the other 13% depend on untrained staff, particularly in publicly administered institutions, which face challenges in attracting and retaining highly qualified educators.

Teacher shortages are a pervasive issue, exacerbated by delayed salaries and insufficient training. This leads to a reliance on under qualified individuals, as illustrated by a female returnee in Nyalath Payam: *"Our children are not receiving a good education now because it is boda boda riders who offered themselves to teach in the school but are not fully committed because they do not receive a salary from either the government or NGOs."* The delay in salary payments has significantly impacted teacher retention, resulting in high turnover rates and disruptions to students' learning. Many teachers abandon their roles due to the lack of reliable compensation.

Pressing needs. Schools in NBeG face significant challenges in providing quality education due to severe shortages in essential resources and infrastructure. Basic materials like textbooks and stationery are missing in 67% of schools, while 85% report a lack of adequate classroom furniture, including desks and chairs.

Figure SEQ Figure * ARABIC 16 Madina School, Aweil



Law enforcement and judicial infrastructure

The legal system blends formal judicial structures with customary mechanisms, such as chiefs' courts, to provide access to justice across diverse community settings. Chiefs and elders play a central role in resolving community disputes, handling issues like minor land disagreements, theft, and family matters. However, the capacity of customary systems is limited, especially for complex cases. As noted by the Deputy Director of Administration at the Aweil RRC, "*We handle disputes locally through the chief's court, and if needed, they are referred to higher courts.*" While hosts tend to rely on traditional mechanisms like chiefs and local police, returnees are more likely to engage with formal systems, such as county or payam administrations, particularly for land title disputes.

The profiled law enforcement and judicial infrastructure in NBeG and surrounding areas encompasses 27 facilities, including police stations, courthouses, and specialized units such as the Refugee Police Station and Special Protection Unit. Key institutions include the High Court, traditional courts, and Aweil State Prison.

Staffing and traffic. Staffing levels across the profiled law enforcement and judicial facilities vary depending on the type and size of the institution. Community security posts typically employ a mix of police officers and administrative staff, while courthouses feature more diverse teams, including judges and legal professionals. Legal aid centers are minimally staffed, primarily by police officers, and police stations rely heavily on officers with limited administrative support. Larger institutions like police stations and courthouses employ the most staff, with some outliers, such as a courthouse with 78 employees and a police station with 57. However, the majority of facilities operate with 3 to 20 staff members.

Staff qualifications highlight a reliance on practical experience and on-the-job training, with 29% of surveyed facilities employing staff who lack formal qualifications but possess "relevant experience." In 17% of facilities, staff hold diplomas or certificates in related disciplines, while 14% of facilities report staff with high school diplomas and specialised training. However, fewer than 9% of facilities have staff with bachelor's degrees, indicating a widespread shortage of formally educated professionals across the sector.

Most police stations (9 out of 12) receive fewer than 10 visitors daily, with three handling 10-50 visitors. Courthouses show mixed levels of activity, with six receiving fewer than 10 visitors daily, two seeing 10-50 visitors, and one hosting more than 100 visitors. Community security posts generally experience low traffic, with three receiving fewer than 10 visitors and one reporting 10-50 visitors daily.

Equipment and condition. Disparities exist in facility conditions and security measures. Most facilities rely on guards (56%) as their primary security measure, while fencing is minimal (15%), and security cameras are entirely absent. 41% of facilities lack any security measures. Structural conditions are also a concern, with nearly half of the facilities classified as poor or very poor. Courthouses face the greatest challenges, with 67% deemed bad or dangerous, while police stations show mixed conditions, with some (33.3%) rated as good and others requiring urgent

Figure SEQ Figure 1* ARABIC 17 Signage in Wedwiel Police Station, Aweil



repair. Accessibility is limited, with fewer than 20% of facilities meeting basic wheelchair access standards.

Across facilities, **critical needs** include:

- Maintenance to address structural issues.
- Equipment upgrades to improve functionality.
- Enhanced staff training to improve service quality.
- Expansion of community outreach programs.
- Security enhancements to safeguard staff and users.

Safe Spaces

Awareness varies significantly between locations, from as low as 2% in Baac Payam to 45% in Gomjuer. Hosts are slightly more likely to recognize protection services (23%) compared to returnees (16%). Even when services are available, accessibility remains a major barrier. Hosts report greater ease of access (53%) than returnees (36%), but both groups face obstacles such as lack of information, transport challenges, and fear of stigma or discrimination. These barriers suggest that protection challenges are widespread, affecting hosts and returnees alike.

Respondents highlighted the absence of a unified referral system, leading to inconsistent handling of cases. In some instances, GBV incidents are reported directly to the police, as community-based mechanisms are often perceived as ineffective. However, even when cases reach the police or courts, they are frequently referred back to community chiefs for mediation and resolution. As noted by a community leader in Nyalath, *"Cases often return to the chiefs for resolution, even after being reported to formal authorities." The severity of incidents plays a critical role in determining how cases are managed: minor disputes are typically addressed by local chiefs, while more severe cases are escalated to police or Boma administrators.*

Respondents also emphasized the lack of counselling and psychological support for GBV survivors. A returnee in Nyalath explained, *"The most survivors can expect are words of encouragement or some support from chiefs and NGOs."* Without structured support systems, many survivors are left without meaningful access to justice or protection. This sentiment is echoed by a Payam Education Supervisor in Malual North, who stated, *"I have never heard of a gender-based violence case; all those referral pathways are not available here."*

Three protection facilities were identified and assessed in NBeG:

1. **Women Center in Baac Payam:** The most comprehensive facility, staffed by 15 members and serving 51-100 visitors daily. It offers legal aid, counselling, livelihood support, and educational programs. Despite its wide scope, the center is overcrowded and struggling to meet demand.
2. **Rum Aker Office:** Operates with only four staff members, yet manages over 100 visitors daily. It focuses on community outreach and awareness, serving as an information and referral hub. Severe overcrowding and understaffing have put its operations at risk.
3. **Women and Girls Friendly Space in Warawar:** Staffed by five members and serving 10-50 visitors daily, this facility provides health support, livelihood training, and childcare services. It is not currently facing overcrowding but has infrastructure issues requiring attention. Only 20% of survey respondents were aware of any available protection spaces.

Challenges and priorities. The quality of services across these facilities is generally regarded as positive, particularly regarding staff behaviour and engagement. However, significant challenges persist in terms of infrastructure and capacity. Basic amenities such as functional sanitation and reliable water access are lacking, and building conditions are often poor, with visible cracks and risks of collapse in some facilities. Equipment upgrades, staff training, and expanded community outreach are identified as critical priorities.

Waterpoints

Type of water point. The analysis of 196 water points in NBeG highlights a heavy reliance on borehole hand pumps, which constitute 80% of all water sources. 60% of household survey respondents rely on this type of water source for their daily drinking water. Other sources, such as hand-drawn wells (11%) and water kiosks (7%), are less common. NGOs have established nearly half of these profiled water points, with local communities and government authorities contributing to the remainder. Community-based water management is prevalent, with 89% of water points managed by committees. 61% of the profiled water points collect fees.⁶

Quality and reliability. Water quality is generally rated positively. However, capacity issues remain a concern, and 14% of returnees rate their access as "Very Poor," nearly three times the rate of hosts. Water availability across the region is inconsistent; nearly a third of water points face interruptions. A third of water points report waits of 30 minutes to 1 hour, and 11% report waits exceeding 1 hour. *"Long queues at water points are common, and the shortage of water is causing disputes. We need more boreholes to be dug."* — Community Leader, Maper Akot Residential Area.

Respondents in Aweil Town and Gomjue East Payam frequently called for separate water points for schools and communities to alleviate pressure: *"The school hand pump populating with returnees we want more hand pump to our community separated from school hand pump."*

Most reported challenges. The primary challenge facing water points in the area is a lack of maintenance, reported by a third of water points. Additional challenges include water scarcity (15%), water quality issues (15%), and infrastructure damage (13%).

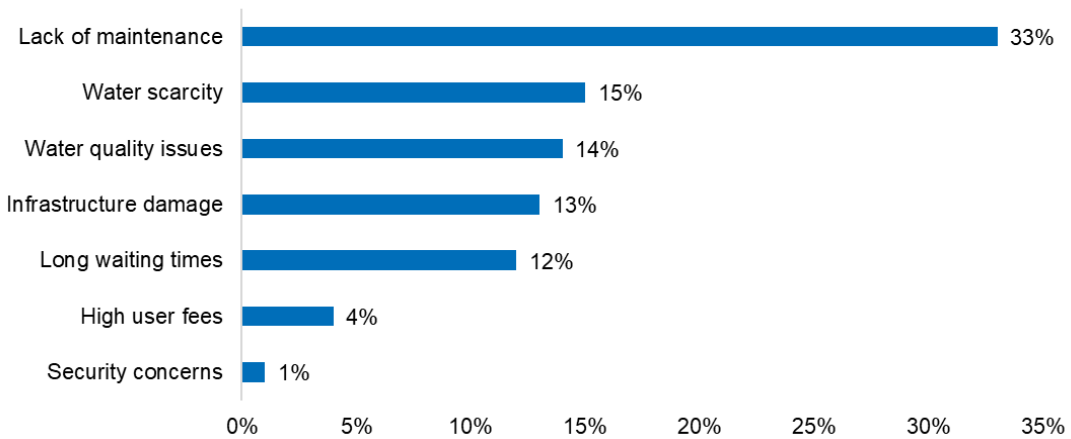
The growing population places significant strain on the water infrastructure. Returnees are particularly vulnerable due to financial pressures and lack of established access, as noted by an RRC representative: *"Barriers are not the same they are different... [hosts] can buy water from the water supplier, maybe also slight differences between rural areas and towns but it's largely the same."*

Figure SEQ Figure 1* ARABIC 18 Mayomdit borehole in Malual North



⁶ Fees are often charged on a per-jerrycan basis or as a monthly rate, although the exact amounts vary and data on this is patchy.

Figure 19 Reported problems at water points



Seeking refuge in Wedweil – Maley’s story

“I intend to stay here. I will live my life as a refugee in Wedweil camp,” says 58-year-old Maley, a refugee from Sudan who arrived in South Sudan earlier this year. Leaving Buram, Sudan, on February 13, 2024, Maley was driven by escalating insecurity and threats against his family. As a vocal opponent of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), as danger increased, Maley was forced to flee. The journey was long and hard, involving multiple forms of transport—donkeys, motorbikes, and long walks through rural landscapes—before he reached the safety of Wedweil settlement. While he managed to avoid direct harm during his journey, the physical toll and uncertainty left lasting impressions.

Although relieved to have reached Wedweil, Maley shares that resources and support are still limited; *“Settling in Wedweil has brought a measure of stability, yet the challenges of starting over are stark. Accommodation remains a pressing issue, with limited space and resources available.”* Separated from his family, Maley struggles to provide for himself and maintain a sense of normalcy. Once a teacher and government employee, he laments the loss of his livelihood and income: *“If I can get a chance to go to Port Sudan, I will be able to receive my salary and live there.”*

Food insecurity compounds the difficulties. Rations are minimal, and opportunities for income generation are scarce. *“We are given only two malwa of grains and beans. It’s not enough,”* he explains.

The host community has played a critical role in easing his transition. Their openness and willingness to share resources have been a source of encouragement. *“The relationship between the refugees and the host communities has no problem and is very good. They welcome us, interact with us at the market, and allow us to rent land for farming,”* he shares. Such cooperation is vital, not only for immediate survival but also for fostering long-term integration and resilience.

However, gaps in essential services continue to hinder progress. Access to healthcare, water, and proper sanitation remains limited, creating significant barriers to well-being. Education facilities are inadequate, and vulnerable groups, including pregnant women and individuals with disabilities, face additional challenges in accessing services. Maley emphasises the importance of addressing these issues to ensure a better future for all: *“The priorities are water, proper settlement spaces, WASH, and health and education services.”*

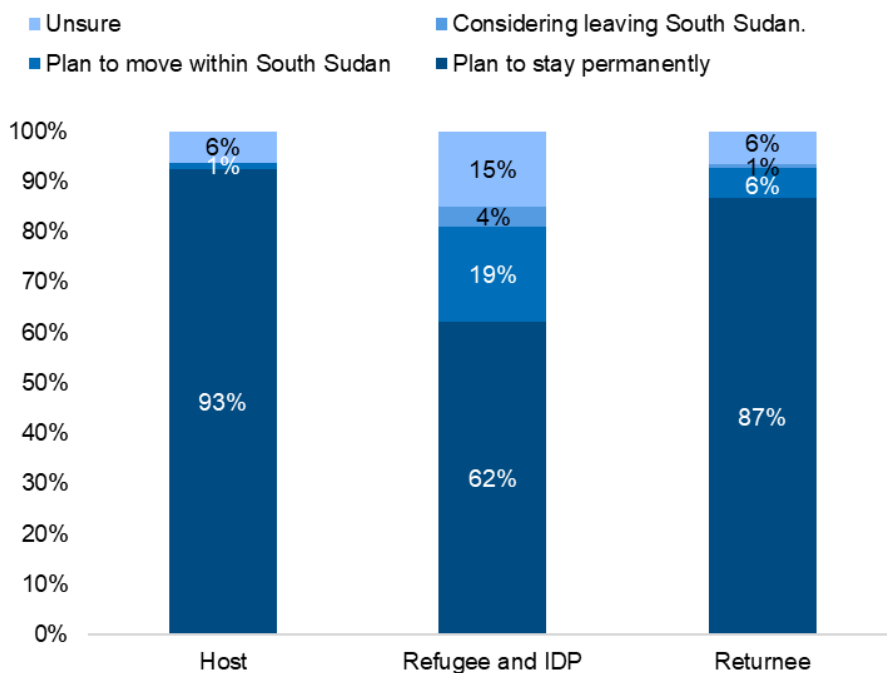
He envisions a future where investments in self-reliance initiatives transform Wedweil into a thriving community. Agricultural projects, vocational training, and small business support could empower refugees and provide them with opportunities to rebuild their lives. *“If the services are improved, this can become an area of good development and services for both refugees and the host community”*

Integration tomorrow

Current perceived barriers to be addressed prior to the arrival of additional returnees.

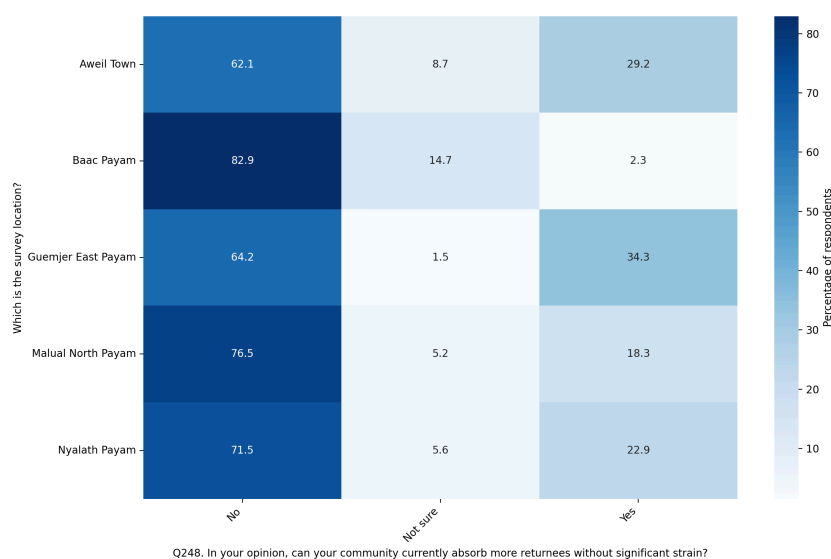
Significant challenges to reintegrate persist in the area, particularly related to access to land (as mentioned by 80% of survey respondents) and housing (46%). 30% of the interviewed returnees state that their food security was much worse than before their displacement. Nonetheless, the data show a strong inclination toward permanent settlement across displaced groups: Host community members demonstrate the greatest commitment to remain, with 94% expressing an intention to stay in their current locations. Returnees similarly show a significant preference for settling permanently, at 87%.

Figure 21 Future plans



Community assessment of absorption capacity. The community in the area expresses significant concern about its capacity to absorb additional returnees. Across all groups, there is a shared sentiment that current resources and infrastructure are inadequate to support a larger population. Among hosts, 73% believe the community cannot accommodate more returnees, a view echoed by 69% of returnees themselves. The challenges underpinning these concerns are largely material, with land scarcity emerging as the most pressing issue. These constraints are particularly pronounced in Baac Payam, where critical limitations in resources are reported, while Gomjuer East Payam displays slightly more optimism about its capacity to manage additional arrivals.

Figure 22 Community assessment of community's ability to absorb more returnees



The apprehension extends beyond material limitations to fears about the strain on services and resources, particularly in areas near the Sudanese border. Legal safety concerns, especially around land rights, add to the uncertainty.

As one Boma Administrator in Apada noted, *“The returnees consume what they have, and then there’s nothing left. If more people come, it will be difficult to support everyone.”* There is a clear warning that without external interventions, local resources will become overwhelmed. As a host in Aguat Boma stated, *“Now, we have many returnees accommodated in our houses, knowing that there is going to be a time when the government and the NGOs will take the responsibility to support them with shelter and food, but if it never happens like that, then there is a problem.”*

Environmental pressure impacting absorption capacity

Environmental challenges significantly impact the community’s ability to absorb additional returnees in NBeG. A considerable portion of respondents (43%) report experiencing noticeable environmental changes, including drought, flooding, and deforestation. These changes directly affect agricultural and livestock activities, which are central to the livelihoods of most residents. Shortages of seeds or farming tools are reported by 77% of respondents, while 67% face crop diseases, and 64% cite insufficient rainfall as a critical issue. Livestock raisers are similarly affected, with 86% reporting animal diseases and 71% struggling with a lack of grazing land.

The analysis of perceived environmental quality across NBeG indicates that some areas, such as Baac Payam, currently benefit from relatively better conditions. However, these regions could face increasing strain as environmental pressures intensify. Aweil Town, which already reports the highest percentage of "Very poor" environmental ratings, serves as a warning of the challenges that could spread across the region. This is particularly concerning for casual laborers and farmers, who are already experiencing significant impacts from environmental stressors. As these changes worsen, their economic stability—and by extension, the community's capacity to support reintegration—will likely erode further.

Assessment of service absorption capacity

Healthcare

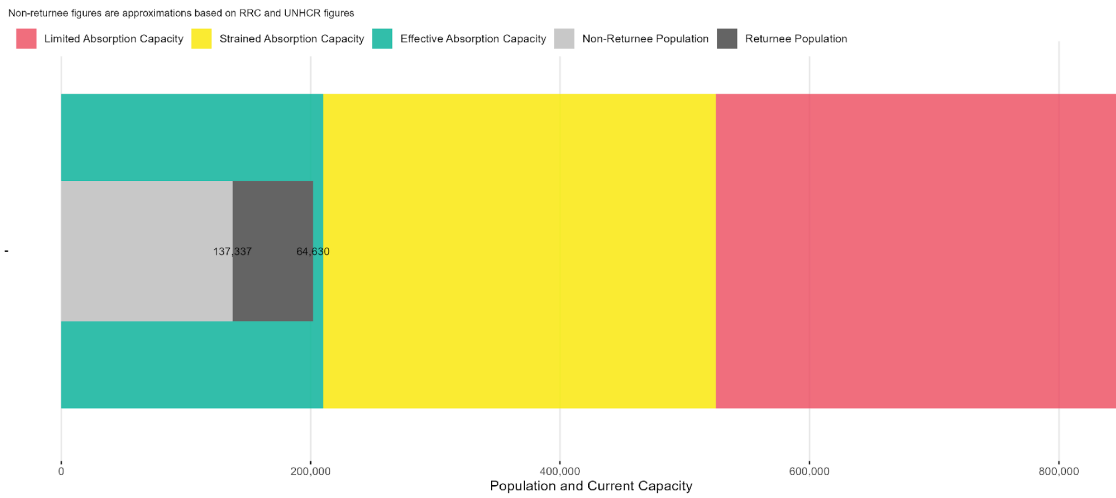
The assessment categorised health facilities based on their service capacity thresholds, aligning with both national government and international Sphere Standards. These thresholds define the number of people a facility can reasonably serve under varying conditions.

Health Facility type	Service capacity thresholds
PHCUs and PHCCs	Ideal capacity: 10, 000 people per facility
	Strained Capacity: 25,000 people per facility
	Maximum Capacity: 50,000 people per facility
County District hospitals	Ideal capacity: 50,000 people per facility
	Strained capacity: 250,000 people per facility
	Maximum capacity: 300,000 people per facility

To determine healthcare absorption capacity, the evaluation considered only facilities meeting minimum quality standards (detailed in Annex 1). Using Sphere Standards, the analysis assessed how many people each facility could serve, excluding facilities that failed quality control due to issues such as inadequate water access, insufficient medicine stock, or high doctor-to-patient ratios.

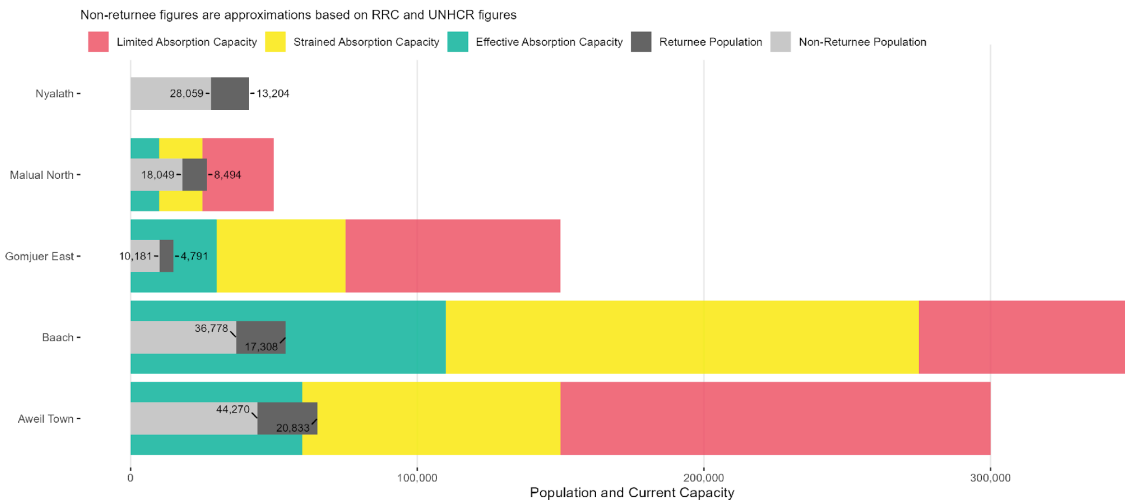
In the capacity calculation using a minimum standards approach, the team considered only the facilities that passed quality control standards, examining their capacity using Sphere Standards to evaluate how many people each facility can serve. **This analysis shows that aggregate healthcare service capacity in the assessed locations is still at an effective absorption capacity level.**

Figure 23 Aggregated health absorption capacity



The results reveal **significant variation in capacity by location** (Payam). Gomjuer East and Baach are within manageable limits ("in the green"), indicating they can absorb more patients, while Malual North and Nyalath payam are at maximum capacity or beyond - suggesting a critical need for additional resources and support in that area if it is to absorb additional population.

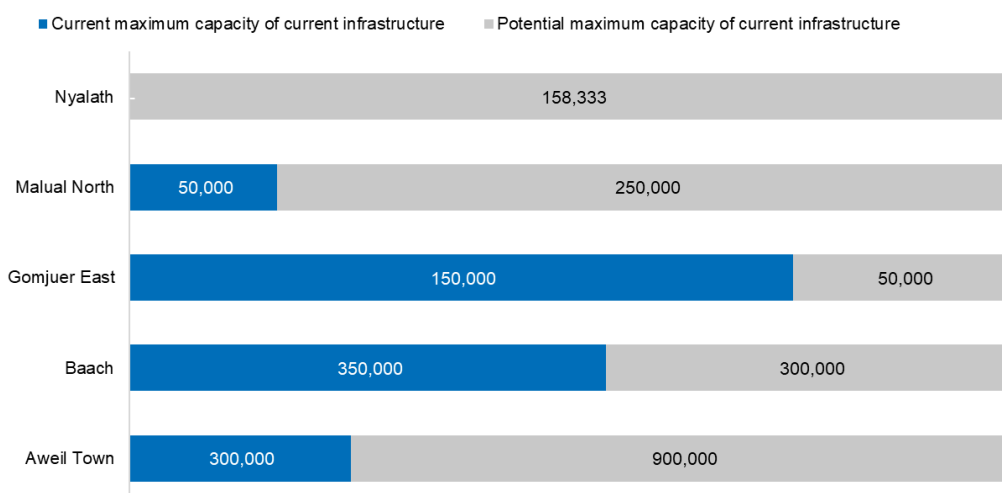
Figure 24 Health absorption capacity at a location level



In total, of the 40 healthcare facilities mapped across the region, 28 (65%) did not meet the minimum quality standards to meaningfully contribute to absorption capacity. Health facilities in Nyalath stand out, because no facilities that met the minimum quality standards were observed to meaningfully contribute to absorption capacity. For most of the health facilities, the stock of medicines was identified as the primary issue, affecting 53% of these poor-quality facilities' contribution to the region's absorption capacity.

The figure below presents the healthcare facilities that meaningfully contribute to the region’s absorption capacity, and those that fail to meet the minimum quality standards. On the right are the number of facilities, and on the left are how those facilities contribute (or could contribute) to the region’s healthcare service capacity when operating at maximum capacity. **If existing infrastructure and services were rehabilitated, they could serve in excess of 1.6 million more people (at maximum capacity)**, according to national carrying capacity standards for different health facilities.

Figure 25 Current versus potential capacity of existing health infrastructure



The infrastructure points that do not meet minimum quality standards are presented below, by specific criteria:

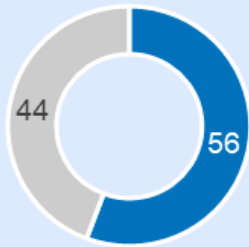
Location	Minimum Standard Failed					
	Unsafe Facility	Poor building condition	No available toilets	No available water	Low stock of essential medicines	High doctor to patient ratio
Aweil Town	0	1	4	6	10	1
Baac	1	0	1	2	5	2
Gomjuer East	0	0	1	0	0	0
Malual North	0	1	1	1	4	1
Nyalath	0	1	2	1	2	1
Total	1	3	9	10	21	5

Addressing the quality concerns of these healthcare centres is likely to have a significant impact on increasing the absorption capacity throughout NBeG. Based on these criteria, supporting the delivery and supply of medicines and assistance in the construction of toilet facilities and access to water would increase the service capacity of the healthcare region as a whole. The estimated number of facilities required to fill that gap for each region (refurbished or built) is presented in the table below :

	Aweil Town	Baac	Gomjuer East	Malual North	Nyalath
Current number of working facilities	6	2	3	1	0
Current number of non-functional facilities	13	6	1	5	3
Number of PHCUs required to meet ideal service provision and effective absorption capacity	2	0	0	3	5
Number of PHCUs required to meet strained service provision and absorption capacity	0	0	0	1	2
Number of PHCUs required to meet maximum service provision and limited absorption capacity	0	0	0	0	1

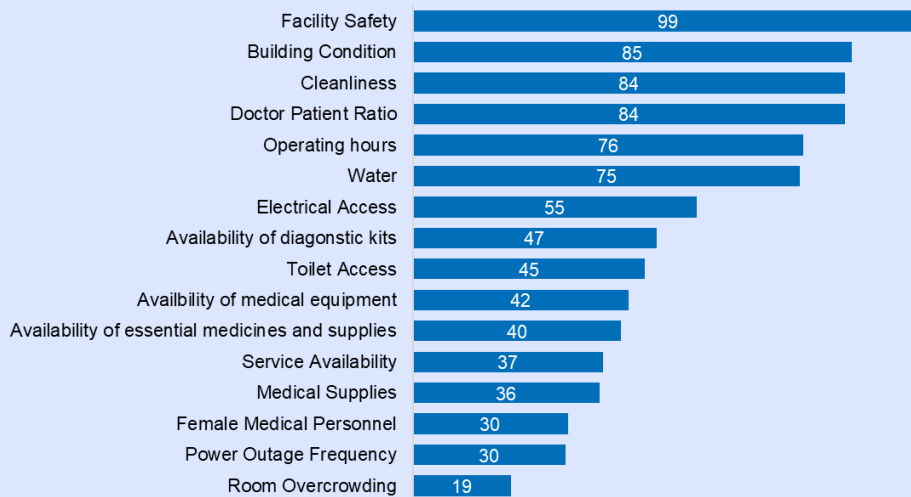
Based on this assessment, the areas of highest concern are Nyalath and Malual North, where current services are operating at maximum capacity or beyond. However, in most areas, the rehabilitation of current services could increase the quality and effectiveness of health coverage across the region, even given the introduction of additional populations. **It is also important to note that the level of service desired would impact the required programmatic input.** For example, in Nyalath, to reach an ideal or baseline service level for the current population, it would require the addition of two new PHCUs (ideal carrying capacity of 10,000 individuals), which meet the minimum criteria along with rehabilitation of the three existing PHCUs. To reach a strained capacity level, only the refurbishment and rehabilitation of two of the current PHCUs would be required (primarily through improving medical supplies). In summary, due to the number of existing facilities in NBeG that do not meet basic service criteria, improving current services is a more pragmatic strategy than building new facilities in most of the region.

Quality Scoring



Based on quality scoring metrics, health facilities scored 56 out of 100 in Northern Bahr el Ghazal given aggregated scores on several indicators.⁷ Facilities in this location scored well across the indicators for safety, cleanliness, building condition and having a daily doctor patient ratio which meets national standards. However, **the facilities scored under 50 on a variety of important indicators**, including availability of medical equipment, supplies and essential medicines, variety of services offered and employment of female medical personnel. These findings highlight that while capacity of healthcare infrastructure is at an effective level given the quantity of facilities functioning at a base level, **significant quality concerns remain.**

Figure 26 Health quality score by indicator



Education

As the region anticipates more students, the main challenges remain inadequate infrastructure, teacher shortages, absenteeism, and delayed salaries, which affect education quality. Environmental factors like seasonal disruptions and long commutes also hinder attendance, worsened by the lack of school feeding programs. Despite these challenges, local stakeholders remain cautiously optimistic, seeing potential for improvement through greater community engagement and support from government agencies and NGOs. PTAs and school management committees are highlighted as key drivers of positive change. Looking ahead, **most schools in NBeG report having some capacity to accommodate additional students.** Approximately 84% of schools state they can take in more students.

⁷ Scores closer to zero represent non-functioning measures of facility quality and scores closer to 100 represent ideally functioning facility quality.

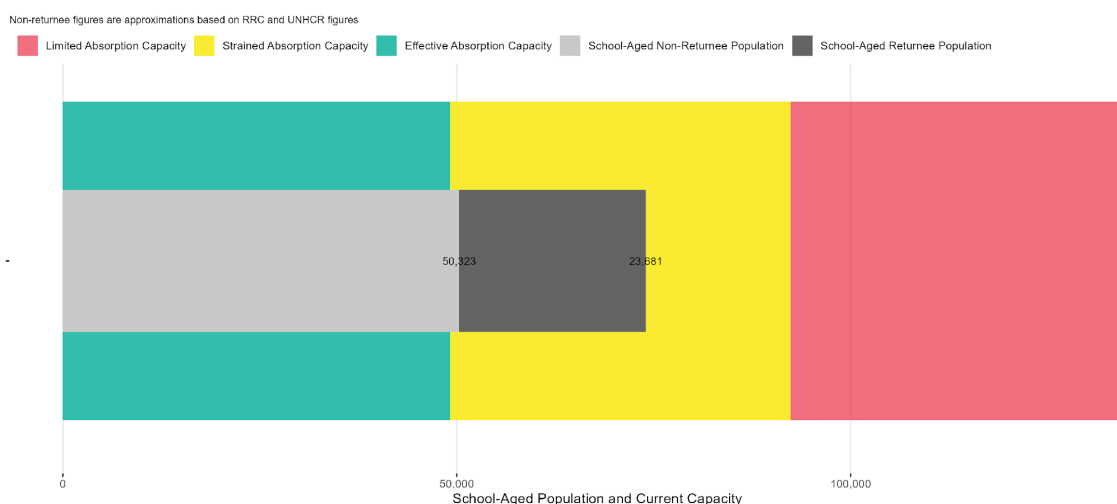
Service capacity thresholds
Ideal capacity: 1 teacher per 50 students
Strained Capacity: 1 teacher per 94 students
Maximum Capacity: 1 teacher per 138 students

Absorption capacity evaluation

Facilities that failed to meet minimum standards (detailed in Annex 1) were excluded from the overall education capacity score. Capacity was calculated based on the number of available teachers, with population figures reflecting the school-aged population rather than the overall population.⁸

To evaluate the capacity of education services, the assessment followed South Sudanese national standards, defining thresholds for teacher-to-student ratios as follows:

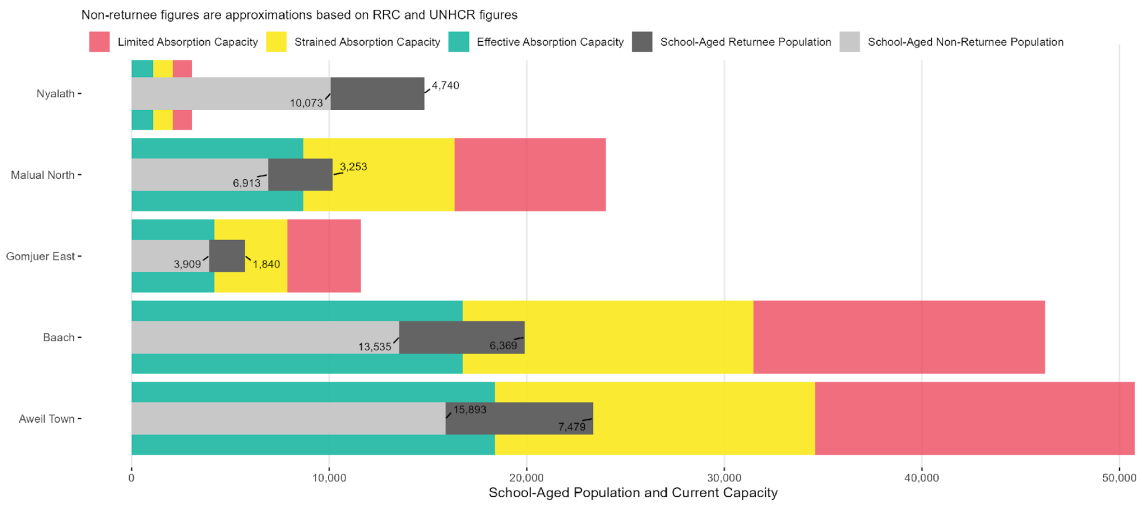
Figure 27 Aggregated education absorption capacity



We find that the capacity to provide minimum standards educational services are currently strained in most locations, **with education centres in Nyalath working beyond maximum capacity.**

⁸ These calculations are based on the entire school aged population, not the number of school aged children enrolled in education facilities.

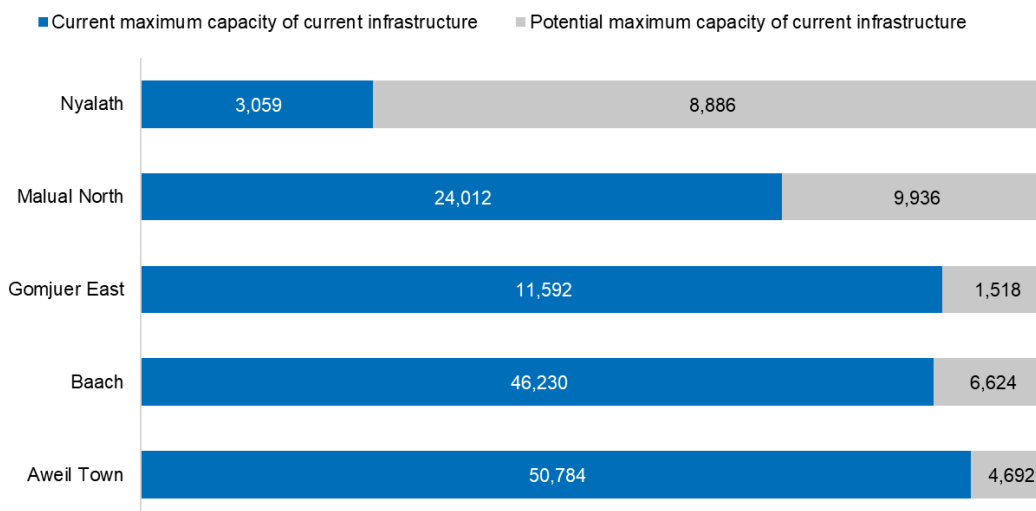
Figure 28 Aggregated education absorption capacity



The figure below presents the education facilities that meaningfully contribute to the region’s absorption capacity, and those that fail to meet the minimum quality standards. On the right are the number of facilities, and on the left are how those facilities contribute (or could contribute) to the region’s education service capacity when operating at baseline capacity. In total, of the 85 education facilities mapped across the region, **24 did not meet the minimum quality standards to meaningfully contribute to absorption capacity.**

In Baac, 8 of the 28 facilities (29%) did not meet the minimum quality standards to be included into the absorption capacity calculation – a higher concentration of poor-quality education facilities compared to other regions. However, facilities which did not meet minimum quality standards in Nyalath had more teachers employed, **meaning that not meeting these standards had a greater knock-on effect to aggregate carrying capacity** as a greater number of teachers were then discounted. For most of the education facilities, a lack of toilets was identified as the primary issue, which was the reason for 71% of these poor-quality facilities’ failing to meet minimum standards and contribute to the regions absorption capacity.

Figure 29: Current versus potential capacity of existing education infrastructure



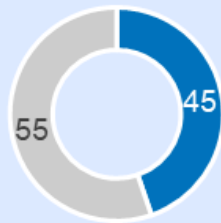
The infrastructure points that don't meet minimum quality standards are presented below, by specific criteria. **Addressing these concerns related to poor-quality infrastructures will increase absorption capacity throughout the region.** Rehabilitating facilities and, crucially, adding more teachers across most payams and locations could enable current facilities to operate at an effective absorption capacity rate. However, in Nyalath, even after rehabilitating all the existing facilities, there would still be a deficit of 2,868 current students, as the current gap is due to a lack of education facilities in the first place.

Location	Minimum Standard Failed		
	Lack of toilets	Poor building condition	Unsafe facility
Aweil Town	1	2	1
Baac	2	5	7
Gomjuer East	0	0	1
Malual North	0	3	6
Nyalath	1	1	2
Total	4	11	17

The estimated number of teachers required to fill that gap for each location is presented in the table below:

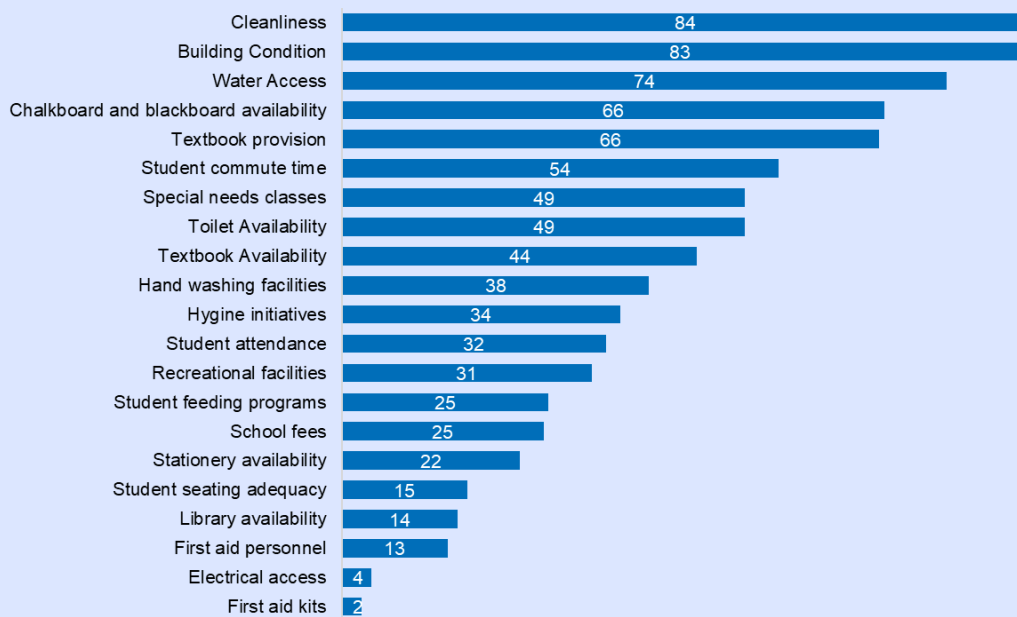
	Aweil Town	Baac	Gomjuer East	Malual North	Nyalath
Current number of teachers in functional facilities	368	335	84	174	61
Current number of teachers in non-functional facilities	34	48	11	72	21
Number of teachers required to meet ideal service provision and effective absorption capacity	99	63	31	29	275
Number of teachers required to meet strained service provision and absorption capacity	0	0	0	0	137
Number of teachers required to meet maximum service provision and limited absorption capacity	0	0	0	0	86

Quality Scoring



Based on quality scoring metrics, education facilities scored 45 out of 100 in Northern Bahr el Ghazl given aggregated scores on several indicators.⁹ Facilities in this location scored well across the indicators for cleanliness, water access and the condition of the building. In Northern Bahr el Ghazal education facilities also scored notably higher on availability of chalkboards than in other assessed locations. **However, poor scores were achieved across a number of indicators such as attendance, hygiene initiatives, existence of school fees, seating adequacy and stationery availability.** Once again highlighting that there are significant quality concerns beyond the number of available teachers.

Figure 30 Education quality score by indicator



Water

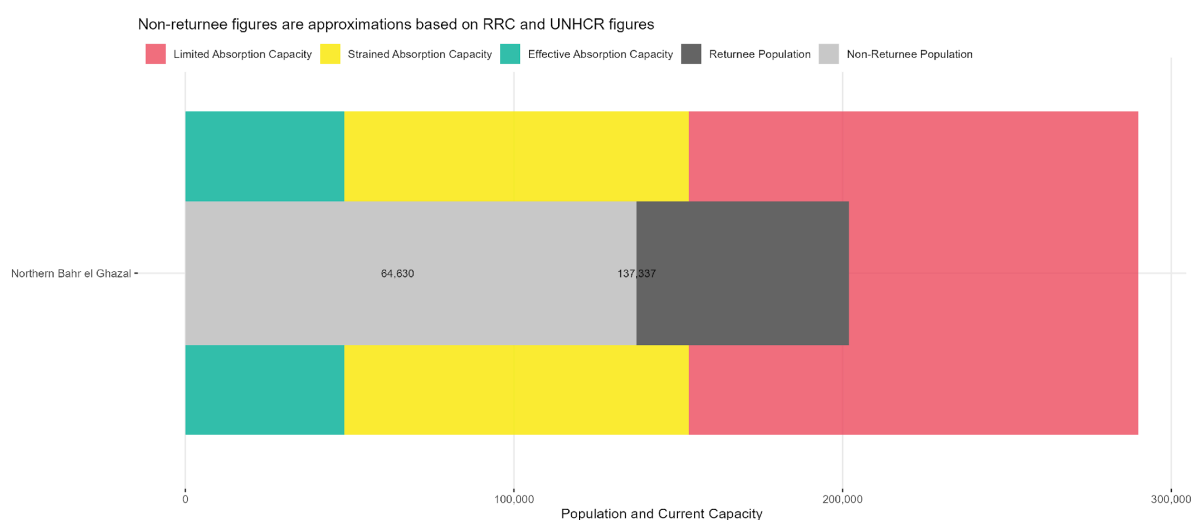
The assessment of water infrastructure utilized Sphere Standards to evaluate current carrying capacity and the ability to absorb additional populations. Service capacity thresholds for different water point types were defined as follows:

⁹ Scores closer to zero represent non-functioning measures of facility quality and scores closer to 100 represent ideally functioning facility quality.

Water point type	Service capacity thresholds
Handpumps	Total water needs (15L pp/day): 250 people per water point
	Survival needs and basic hygiene (4.5L pp/day): 832 people per water point
	Survival needs (2.5L pp/day): 1,500 people per facility
Motorized pump	Total water needs (15L pp/day): 500 people per water point
	Survival needs and basic hygiene (4.5L pp/day): 1,665 people per water point
	Survival needs (2.5L pp/day): 3,000 people per water point

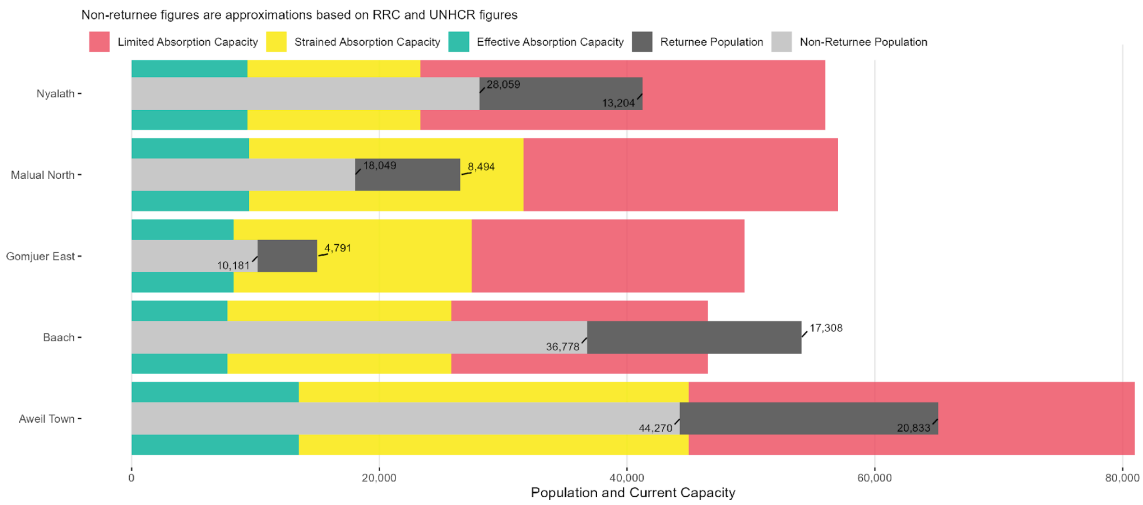
Water sources that failed to meet minimum standards for consistent, clean, and safe water supply were excluded from the overall carrying capacity calculation (see Annex 1 for details on standards).

Figure 31 Aggregated water absorption capacity



Based on our Sphere standards-based assessment, **water supply in the assessed area is nearing maximum capacity**, with a current service demand close to 201,000 people in the areas profiled. This places the water system in the red zone, indicating that it is already overburdened and will struggle to meet additional demand without significant infrastructure improvements. Gomjuer East appears to be best prepared for population growth or returnees, with most water points able to handle more users.

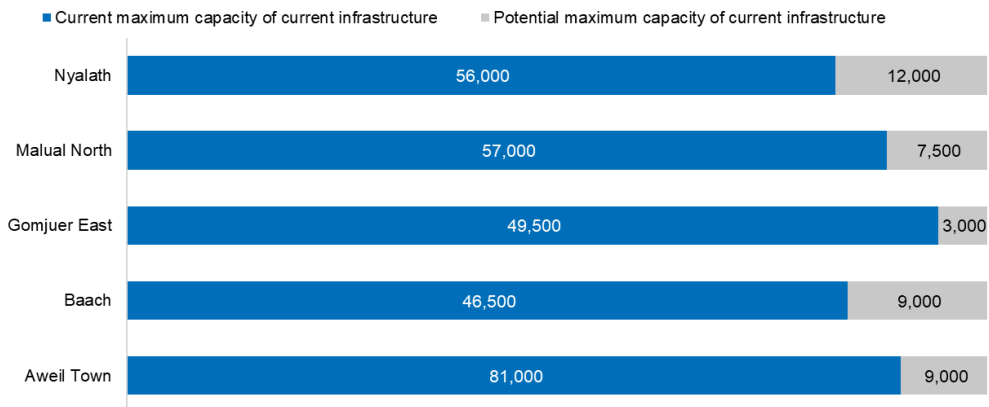
Figure 32 Aggregated education absorption capacity



Improving capacity

The figure below presents the water point facilities that meaningfully contribute to the region’s absorption capacity, and those that fail to meet the minimum quality standards. On the right are the number of facilities, and on the left are how those facilities contribute (or could contribute) to the region’s education service capacity when operating at baseline capacity.

Figure 33 Potential versus current maximum capacity of water infrastructure



In total, of the 193 water points mapped across the region, only 25 did not meet the minimum quality standards to meaningfully contribute to absorption capacity. These poor-quality infrastructure points were evenly distributed across the region. For these water points, **consistent water availability was identified as the primary issue**, affecting 56% of these facilities. The infrastructure points that don’t meet minimum quality standards are presented below, by specific criteria.

Addressing the quality concerns of these water points, however, is likely to have a minimal impact on increasing the absorption capacity throughout the region. Given that these poor-quality infrastructure points make up 13% of the existing infrastructure points, even refurbishing all of these infrastructure points is unlikely to significantly increase the absorption capacity of their respective payams.

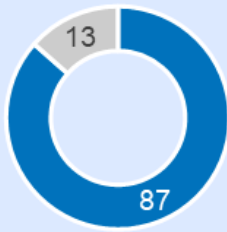
Location	Minimum Standard Failed		
	Poor consistency	Poor quality water	Unsafe facility
Aweil Town	1	1	5
Baac	5	1	0
Gomjuer East	1	1	0
Malual North	2	3	1
Nyalath	5	0	1
Total	14	6	7

The estimated number of facilities required to fill that gap for each region (refurbished or built) is presented in the table below.

	Aweil Town	Baac	Gomjuer East	Malual North	Nyalath
Current number of working water points	45	29	30	36	28
Current number of non-functioning water points	6	6	2	5	6
Number of borehole handpumps required to meet total water needs	206	185	27	68	128
Number of borehole handpumps required to meet hygiene and survival needs	24	34	0	0	12
Number of borehole handpumps required to meet survival needs	0	5	0	0	0

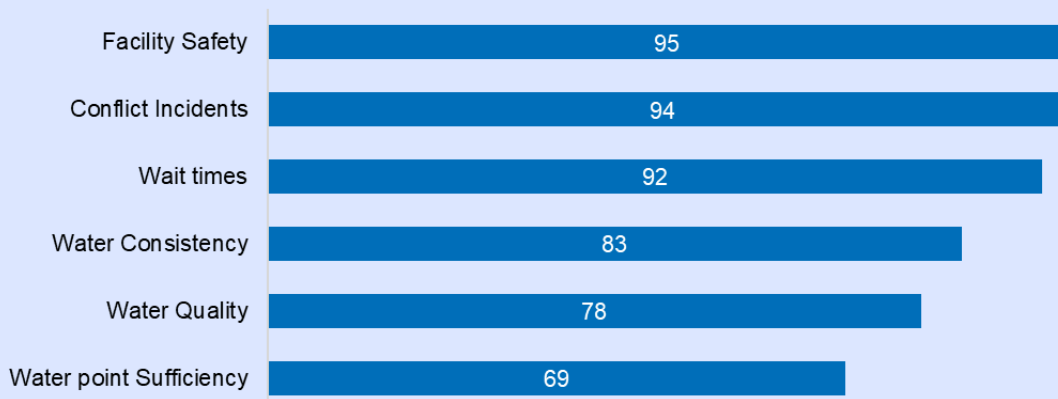
With waterpoints operating at baseline service capacities, **each region in NBeG is assessed to require significant additions to the current stock of waterpoints to fill existing service capacity gaps, far beyond the stock of current poor-quality water points.** With a target of waterpoints operating at strained capacities, Aweil Town, Baac and Nyalath are still expected to require about 60 additional handpumps to fill the service gap, many more than are available to be refurbished (18).

Quality Scoring



Based on quality scoring metrics, education facilities scored 56 out of 100 in Northern Bahr el Ghazl given aggregated scores on several indicators.¹⁰ **The relatively high quality suggests that, while there are rooms for improvement, sufficiency of the current water network is more of an obstacle than quality within this location.** Supplementing this finding, our quality analysis found Northern Bahr el Ghazl scored most poorly on wait times, which would likely be addressed by additional water points.

Figure 34 Water quality score by indicator



Judicial infrastructure and safe spaces. Police stations, courthouses, and community security posts in the profiled areas handle various community needs, from minor disputes resolved through customary systems to more complex cases requiring formal judicial processes. Chiefs’ courts and local police remain the first points of contact for most issues, while larger facilities, like the High Court and Aweil State Prison, manage escalated cases. These facilities face significant limitations. Over half are in poor or very poor condition, with courthouses particularly affected - 67% categorized as bad or dangerous. Accessibility is also a challenge, with fewer than 20% of facilities meeting basic standards for disabled access. Staffing levels are inconsistent, with some facilities operating with as few as three personnel, while others manage larger teams but are still overstretched due to increasing caseloads.

While it is not possible to quantify the exact capacity of these facilities in the absence of national or Sphere standards, the current state of infrastructure, staffing, and operational capacity suggests they are stretched but functional. Observations indicate that addressing structural and operational gaps would improve the ability of the existing system to meet current demands effectively. At the time of data collection, one in five had already noted increased workloads, citing rises in disputes, crime rates, and service demands tied to returnees and refugees. Reported accommodation capacity across facilities reveals a mixed picture. Of the 27 assessed facilities, 13 are at full capacity, 12 report rooms to accommodate additional demand, and 2 are uncertain about their capacity. Police stations

¹⁰ Scores closer to zero represent non-functioning measures of facility quality and scores closer to 100 represent ideally functioning facility quality.

demonstrate the most flexibility in terms of capacity to handle increased demand. By contrast, judicial facilities often operate at maximum capacity.

Safe spaces in the area are limited, with only three facilities identified. These spaces provide crucial services, including counseling, legal aid, and livelihood support, to vulnerable populations, particularly women and girls. However, they operate under severe constraints. Infrastructure issues, including inadequate sanitation and limited space, are common. For example, the Baac Payam women’s center is overcrowded, serving 51–100 visitors daily, far beyond its intended capacity.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Key findings

1. Physical safety: Overall, perceptions of safety in NBeG are positive, with most respondents—hosts, returnees, and IDPs—reporting a general sense of security and peaceful coexistence. Community trust is strong, and social cohesion remains robust, as both returnees and host community members engage in shared activities such as farming, church gatherings, and traditional events. However, isolated security challenges persist, particularly livestock theft and occasional cattle raids in border areas. Land disputes are a recurring concern, with half of respondents highlighting them as a potential source of tension. Law enforcement is generally functional but under-resourced, with community policing and traditional leadership structures playing a key role in maintaining local security.

2. Material safety: Material safety remains precarious, marked by acute food insecurity, limited livelihoods, and overcrowded shelter conditions. Returnees, in particular, face heightened vulnerabilities, arriving with few resources and relying heavily on host communities for support. Farming dominates as the main livelihood but is hindered by insufficient access to seeds, tools, and unpredictable environmental conditions such as flooding and drought. Many households report relying on negative coping mechanisms, including skipping meals and borrowing food. Access to adequate shelter remains limited, with returnees disproportionately living in makeshift or overcrowded conditions.

3. Legal safety: Community-based mechanisms, such as chiefs' courts and traditional leaders, play a central role in resolving disputes, particularly around land ownership. However, formal governance structures are less accessible, primarily due to distance, cost, and capacity issues. Corruption and limited funding for public services further exacerbate challenges, with both hosts and returnees identifying these as systemic barriers. Returnees are more likely to face land disputes and often lack formal land tenure, leaving them in a precarious legal position.

4. Reintegration Sustainability Scores (RSS): The Reintegration Sustainability Score (RSS), calculated across Economic, Social, and Safety dimensions, highlights significant disparities in reintegration outcomes among returnee groups. Returnees in their place of origin report the highest scores across all dimensions, indicating comparatively better reintegration outcomes. In contrast, returnees not in their area of origin face the greatest challenges, with lower economic, social, and safety scores reflecting difficulties in building stability in unfamiliar areas.

5. Infrastructure and services today:

- **Healthcare:** Healthcare facilities are present but strained, particularly in rural areas. Many Primary Health Care Units and Centers (fail to meet minimum standards, with inadequate water, sanitation, and medicine stocks being the most common gaps. Access to essential medicines, such as antibiotics, is inconsistent, while specialized care, including maternal health and mental health services, is severely limited. Staffing remains critically low, especially for trained professionals, forcing facilities to rely on under qualified personnel. Costs of treatment and long travel distances further hinder access, particularly for returnees.

- **Education:** Enrolment rates are high at the primary level but decline at the secondary level, reflecting financial and infrastructure-related barriers. Schools across the region face significant resource shortages, with many lacking classrooms, toilets, and basic learning materials such as textbooks and desks. Overcrowding is a widespread challenge, compounded by a severe shortage of qualified teachers, many of whom remain unpaid or untrained. In areas like Nyalath and Baac, makeshift “under-tree” schools highlight the urgency of investing in permanent, functional facilities.
- **Law enforcement and safe spaces:** Law enforcement and judicial infrastructure are limited and poorly maintained, with facilities operating at reduced capacity due to staffing shortages and structural deterioration. Most police stations and courthouses lack basic equipment and security measures, while formal legal processes are inaccessible for many, forcing reliance on traditional dispute-resolution systems. Safe spaces for vulnerable populations, particularly women and children, are extremely limited, poorly equipped, and largely unknown to the broader community
- **Water:** Water quality is generally fair but long wait times—often exceeding one hour—are common, particularly in high-density areas. Rural and underserved payams, such as Nyalath, face the greatest challenges, with limited water points forcing residents to rely on unsafe or distant alternatives. Without significant rehabilitation and expansion, the current system is unlikely to meet growing demand.

6. Integration tomorrow: Despite significant challenges, both returnees and host community members express a strong intention to remain permanently in their current locations. However, concerns about the region’s ability to absorb additional populations persist. The community identifies critical priorities for improvement, including access to housing, healthcare, education, and land. Addressing these gaps is seen as essential to ensuring long-term reintegration and supporting population growth.

7. Service Absorption Capacity:

- **Healthcare:** The healthcare system in the area shows significant disparities in its ability to absorb additional populations. While regions like Gomjuer East and Baac remain within manageable service limits, others, such as Malual North and Nyalath, have already exceeded maximum capacity thresholds. Nyalath, in particular, lacks a single functioning facility that meets minimum quality standards. Across the assessed locations, 28 of the 40 healthcare facilities failed to meet basic standards due to inadequate water access, limited medicine stocks, and poor infrastructure.
- **Education:** Education infrastructure is stretched to its limits, with schools in Nyalath operating beyond maximum capacity. Across the region, 24 out of 85 facilities fail to meet minimum standards, largely due to the absence of toilets and poor building conditions. Teacher shortages remain a critical bottleneck.
- **Water:** Water infrastructure is at near-maximum capacity, with systems already struggling to meet current survival-level needs (2.5L per person/day). Although 25 non-functional water points could be refurbished to alleviate some pressure, this alone will not close the existing gap.
- **Judicial and Safe Spaces:** Judicial facilities, including police stations and courthouses, are overstretched, with over half in poor condition and limited staffing. While police stations report some flexibility to handle increased demand, courthouses often operate at capacity, limiting their ability to address complex cases. Safe spaces are critically limited, with only three facilities in the entire region.

Recommendations

1. Enhanced access to water: Insufficient water infrastructure in NBeG affects both hosts and returnees, causing long queues and disputes. Addressing this requires expanding water infrastructure by building additional boreholes in underserved areas like Wedweil West and Apada. It is estimated that within the assessed locations in Northern Bahr el Ghazal, an additional 614 water points would be required to meet the total water needs of the current population (15L per person per day), many more than could be met by refurbishing currently defunct water points (25 water points). However, to reach a strained level of capacity (4.5L of water per person per day) only an additional 60 water points could be required. Other important interventions from development actors would include engaging with and supporting local water management committees to ensure that boreholes are regularly maintained and do not fall into disrepair.

2. Improved educational infrastructure: By addressing quality concerns faced by schools in these areas, development actors could increase the maximum operating capacity of education infrastructure in the region by an additional 31,656 students without the employment of any additional teachers. However, there remain significant quality challenges, with education infrastructure hindered by overcrowding, under-resourced schools, and unpaid teachers, let alone an absence of permanent structures for schools in areas like Apada and Warawar, which also lack basic water and hygiene facilities.

Teacher shortages and delayed payments must be resolved through collaboration with local authorities to ensure timely salaries and recruit additional staff. Essential learning materials, including textbooks, desks, and supplies, should be distributed to improve education quality. Introducing school feeding programs can further enhance attendance and link nutrition with educational outcomes, particularly in food-insecure areas. A regional approach should be applied, with Nyalath particularly under served, requiring an additional 86 teachers to even meet maximum capacity standards – in this location, additional schools and teachers should be a priority.

3. Increasing access to healthcare: While healthcare on aggregate is operating at an effective absorption rate, significant regional disparities exist. No assessed health facilities in Nyalath payam met minimum standards, meaning that a population of over 41,000 has no local access to a base level functioning health centre. Refurbishing two health facilities in this location through facilitating water access, building toilet facilities and increasing stocks of essential medicines would enable healthcare infrastructure in this location to reach a strained capacity; however, an additional 3 facilities would still be required for this region to meet ideal service standards. In the other assessed regions, quality of healthcare remains a key concern. Our quality scoring suggests that on aggregate, facilities scored under 50 (out of 100) on a variety of important indicators, including availability of medical equipment, supplies and essential medicines, variety of services offered and employment of female medical personnel. For healthcare in Northern Bahr el Ghazal to function effectively, it is vital that development actors prioritise and advocate the distribution of equipment and supplies as well as support the addition of more specialised care services to improve health service provision at a regional level.

4. Strengthening livelihoods: Economic vulnerability in NBeG, particularly for returnees, is exacerbated by limited access to livelihoods beyond subsistence farming. Development actors should prioritize expanding support for sustainable agricultural practices, including the provision of climate-resilient seeds, tools, and training in modern techniques. In areas such as Gomjuer East and Aweil Town, where markets are more accessible, small business grants and vocational training programs tailored to local economic needs could empower returnees and hosts to diversify their income sources. Additionally, investing in shared economic initiatives, such as cooperative farming schemes, can foster both economic resilience and social cohesion.

Annex

1. Respondent Profile

The household survey in Aweil and surrounding areas covered 824 respondents, predominantly women (88%), with an average age of 35 years and household sizes averaging eight members. The sample included 52% returnees, 39% host community members, and 8% other displaced groups, such as IDPs and refugees. Education levels were low, with most respondents completing primary school and fewer attaining secondary or vocational training. The average age of respondents is 35.3 years, ranging from 18 to 90 years, and half of the respondents are between 25.8 and 41.2 years old. Households in the sample are relatively large, with an average size of 8.3 members.

The data on return patterns for NBeG reveals key insights into migration and displacement trends. Most respondents left South Sudan during periods of heightened conflict, with notable peaks in 2016, 2019, and 2024, reflecting recent instability. A significant majority (357) have not returned multiple times, while 59 respondents reported multiple returns, with most returning twice. The most common years of last return are 2023 and 2024, indicating a recent wave of returnees. Sudan is the primary country of displacement, with 417 respondents returning from there.

The analysis of reasons for return to South Sudan in NBeG highlights that the majority of returnees were driven by push factors from their host countries, with "Conflict or insecurity in the country of asylum" being the most cited reason (72%). Emotional ties, such as "Wanting to return, missing home" (30%) and family reunification (23%), were also significant motivators. Pull factors, like "Improvement in the security situation in South Sudan" (18%) and economic opportunities, played a smaller role. Returns were, therefore, largely influenced by adverse conditions in asylum countries rather than substantial improvements in South Sudan.

The most prevalent form of assistance provided to returnees and displaced populations was housing assistance, with 95% of respondents benefiting from it. This reflects a strong focus on providing shelter. Additionally, 34% of respondents received agricultural support. The overall effectiveness of the assistance provided in NBeG received an average rating of 3.0 (on a scale of 5), with 67% of respondents finding the assistance "somewhat effective."

The analysis of future movement intentions among returnees in NBeG reveals that the vast majority (87%) plan to stay permanently in their current location. Only 9% plan to move within South Sudan, while 3% are unsure, and a small fraction (2%) are considering leaving South Sudan altogether. Among those who plan to move, the reasons are fairly evenly distributed across three main categories: returning to original land/homeland, land issues in current location, and seeking better opportunities. The data suggests that movement intentions are primarily driven by either a desire to return to ancestral lands or challenges with land ownership in current locations, followed by aspirations for better economic and educational opportunities.

2. Key informant interviews conducted for this stud

Interview Type	Location and respondent profile
Key informant Interview	Aweil, Male, RRC
Key informant Interview	Aweil, Male, Community Leader
Key informant Interview	Nyalath, Female, Women's leader
Key informant Interview	Apada, Male, Boma administrator
Key informant Interview	Wedweil, Male, Boma RRC facilitator
Key informant Interview	Rum Aker, Male, Boma administrator
Key informant Interview	Adal, Male, Community youth leader
Key informant Interview	Warawar, Male, Payam chief
Key informant Interview	Malual North, Male, Payam education supervisor

3. Minimum Standards

While any concerted strategy to improve absorption capacity in South Sudan would require more rigorous analysis, the absorption capacity evaluation highlights several promising avenues for targeted intervention strategies across the region. Our analysis considers two intervention approaches: developing **additional** service points in the region, and **refurbishing existing** service points.

Our analysis focuses on healthcare, education, and water points. When considering absorption capacity for these infrastructure points, we included a minimum quality assessment to determine **whether each service point was robustly operating at a standard that meaningfully contributes to the service capacity of the region**. We present the disqualifying criteria for each infrastructure point below. If any of these criteria were presented at the infrastructure point, they were not considered as meaningfully contributing to the region's absorption capacity.

Water points	Healthcare	Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Water is rarely available, with frequent shortages or extended periods without water b. The water quality is below acceptable standards and poses potential health risks c. There are security concerns or incidents related to walking to / queuing, especially for women, at this water point 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Often (Regular incidents, indicating a concerning pattern) incidents of violence affecting the health facility in the recent past? b. The building infrastructure is in very poor condition, with severe damage, decay, or disrepair. There are multiple safety hazards, structural weaknesses, or critical maintenance issues that render the facility unsafe or unusable. c. There are no toilets in this health facility d. There is no access to water in this health facility e. Very Low Supplies Stock (expected to last less than a week) f. A patient of doctor ratio of over 50 to 1 per day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Often (Regular incidents, indicating a concerning pattern) violent incidents outside of this school? b. The building infrastructure is in very poor condition, with severe damage, decay, or disrepair. There are multiple safety hazards, structural weaknesses, or critical maintenance issues that render the facility unsafe or unusable. c. There are no toilets in this school

Visual examples of facilities that do not meet the minimum quality criteria in Aweil

Water points	Healthcare	Education
 <p data-bbox="204 1848 502 1966"><i>Water pump in Baac- Water is rarely available, with frequent shortages or extended periods without water</i></p>	 <p data-bbox="566 1848 933 1966"><i>Sanitation facilities at a PHCU in Aweil Town - The building infrastructure is in very poor condition, with severe damage, decay, or disrepair.</i></p>	 <p data-bbox="981 1854 1348 1973"><i>School in Baac - The building infrastructure is in very poor condition, with severe damage, decay, or disrepair.</i></p>

REINTEGRATION AND ABSORPTION CAPACITY ASSESSMENT OF **NORTHERN BAHR EL GHAZAL**

Reintegration and Absorption Capacity Assessment