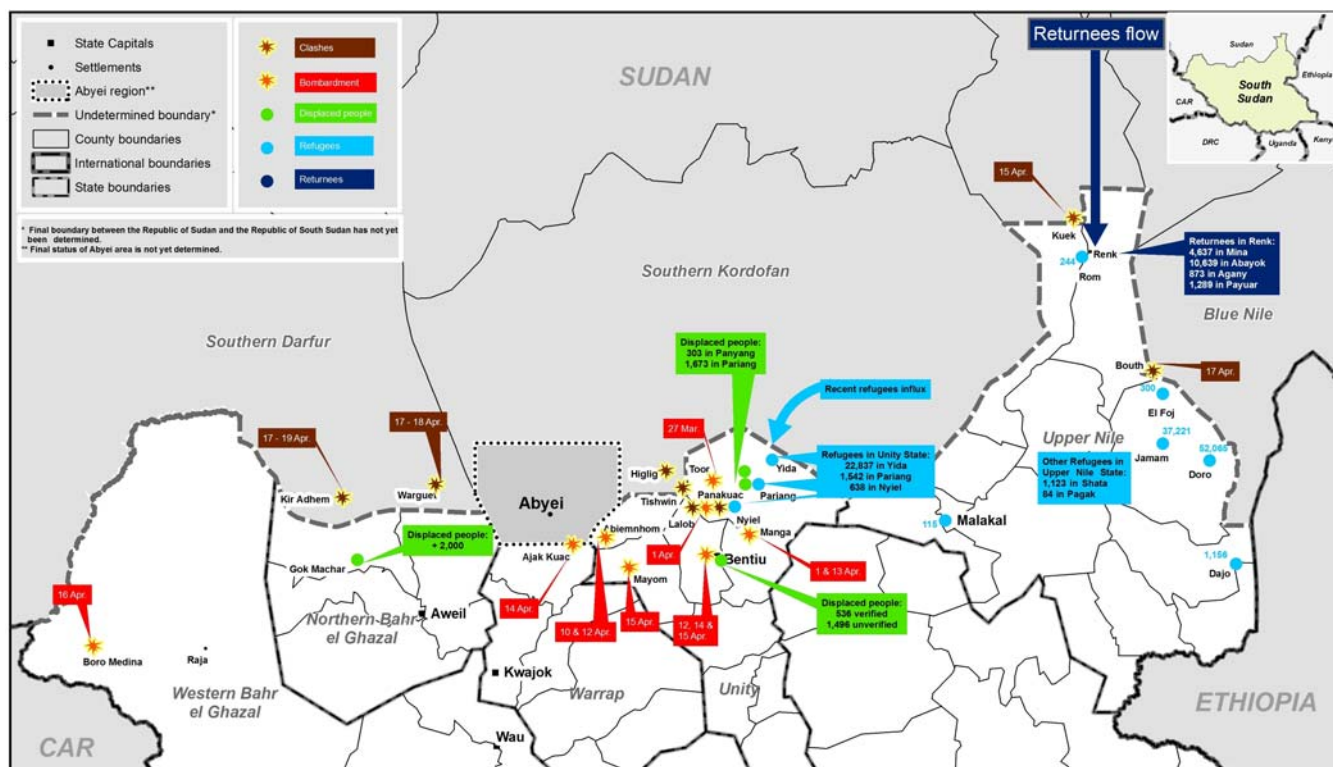


19 April 2012

Highlights:

- Clashes and/or bombardments were reported in all five border states between South Sudan and Sudan, as hostilities continued between the two countries.
- A United Nations compound was struck in an aerial bombardment of Unity State on 15 April, although no casualties were reported.
- Food insecurity is likely to worsen along the border states with Sudan if the current situation continues, warns food security and livelihood partners.

I. Situation overview



South Sudan and Sudan remained locked in a tense military standoff over the week, with Sudan continuing military bombardments into South Sudan and South Sudanese troops retaining control of the disputed Heglig area. Bombings hit parts of Unity, Warrap, Western Bahr el Ghazal and the Agok area, while ground fighting also broke out in border areas in Northern Bahr el Ghazal and Upper Nile. A UN facility in Unity State's Mayom town was bombed on 15 April, although no casualties were reported. As of 18 April, 12 people had reportedly been killed and 312 injured (35 civilians) in South Sudan since fighting stepped up in late March. Hopes for a potential de-escalation of the crisis increased late in the week, when the President of South Sudan ordered South Sudanese troops to pull back from the Heglig area.

The recent escalation in north-south hostilities has yet to result in any significant humanitarian consequences. However, the humanitarian community remains gravely concerned about the potential impact of escalating violence on civilians. In addition to border risks, humanitarians continue assisting 110,000 people displaced from Abyei, some 140,000 people affected by recent inter-communal violence in Jonglei State, and close to 113,000 refugees in Upper Nile and Unity states, who have fled fighting in Sudan. Partners are also planning for the potential mass return of the South Sudanese in Sudan, following passage of an 8 April deadline on their residency status. With many aspects of the worst case scenario drawn up for South Sudan by humanitarian partners now fulfilled, the Humanitarian Country Team on 14 April resolved to move into the Crisis Response Mode of the

Humanitarian Contingency Plan. Relief agencies continue to pre-position humanitarian supplies before the rainy season intensifies and starts cutting off overland access to large parts of the country.

II. Humanitarian challenges: needs and response

Conflict reported along all border states with Sudan

Greater Bahr el Ghazal, Warrap, Unity and Upper Nile states were all affected by hostilities over the week. In Northern Bahr el Ghazal, cross-border fighting on 17-19 April in the contested border area of Kiir Adhem reportedly triggered population movements to Gokmachar in Aweil North. A rapid inter-agency assessment was carried out in Gokmachar on 19 April to assess humanitarian impacts, with the team identifying close to 2,000 displaced people – mainly women, children and the elderly – in need of assistance. Additional people have reportedly continued to arrive, indicating that displacement levels are likely to rise. The team will return for further verification and assistance on 21 April. Priority needs identified thus far include food, water and sanitation facilities, non-food items and emergency shelter.

In Warrap State, an aerial bombardment took place on 14 April in the Ajak Kuac and Molban areas in Twic County. In the northern border of Upper Nile State, fighting broke out in Manyo County's Kuek area on 15 April. Casualties are as yet unknown. An NGO working in the area relocated following the violence, but continues to carry out daily visits to the area.

Aerial bombardments continued in Unity State, striking UN compound

Unity State was hit by a string of aerial bombardments over the reporting period, hitting Bentiu, Mayom, Abiemnhom and Manga. A UN peacekeeping mission premises in Mayom town withstood material damage after being struck by two bombs on 15 April. Residents in Bentiu were reported to have begun moving to Nhialdiu, Mayendit, Leer, Koch and Guit as a result of the bombardments. An inter-agency assessment will visit Nhialdiu on 20 April to assess if the move has had other any humanitarian consequences. UN agency non-essential staff and six NGOs temporarily relocated from Bentiu as a result of the insecurity, with one returning so far. Humanitarian partners are looking at the possibility of using Leer as a hub for humanitarian response operations, located a safer distance from the border. The verification of some 1,500 people in Bentiu displaced because of earlier bombing in Pariang County is scheduled to take place early next week. An inter-agency assessment team carried out over the week to verify people displaced by earlier bombing and clashes in Pariang County verified 1,693 people displaced in Pariang town and 303 displaced in Panyang.

Deterioration of security in Unity State causes partial relocation of aid agencies

The deterioration of the security situation in Unity State has affected a number of relief operations and caused the relocation of some humanitarian staff to safer areas further south. Despite the insecurity, however, aid agencies continued their coverage of refugee sites in Pariang, Nyeel and Yida. In Yida refugee camp – where the majority of the refugees are located – the population has increased to over 22,800 people, with more than 6,800 reported to have arrived since the detailed Level 2 registration was completed on 20 March, according to UNHCR. An average of 275 people are reported to have arrived each day over the last week, fleeing fighting and a lack of food in Sudan's Southern Kordofan. Due to safety concerns partners continue to advocate for the relocation of refugees from Yida to a site further away from the border, and have had meetings with refugee leaders in this regard. Focus group discussions were conducted with unaccompanied minors and separated boys living in common compounds in Yida to ascertain their protection needs. Protection actors are working on alternative solutions for the compounds, including the identification of foster families.

In Yida, food assistance was provided to 12,700 refugees during the week, bringing the total number assisted so far in April to about 17,700 people. Food assistance to new arrivals is ongoing. Mosquito nets and soap were distributed to more than 1,200 vulnerable people. There is a need to improve water, sanitation and hygiene facilities at the site, including providing enhanced water access and additional latrines. In response, partners are working to increase the number of latrines available. In Pariang, relief agencies are digging new emergency latrines and the basic construction of four longhouses and one cookhouse has been completed. In Nyeel, refugees are constructing shelters and digging pits for latrines in preparation for the rainy season.

Pre-rain contingency planning underway at refugee sites in Upper Nile

The security situation in Upper Nile State's Maban County remains calm but unpredictable, with unconfirmed reports indicating that troops and rebel militia groups are amassing along both sides of the border with Sudan. Upper Nile hosts the largest number of refugees in South Sudan, with close to 90,000 people having fled to the

area because of ongoing fighting in Sudan's Blue Nile State. The majority of the refugees – some 52,000 people – are registered in Doro, while over 37,000 individuals are registered in Jammam. Registration of new arrivals to the refugee sites did not take place this week as final preparations for a detailed Level 2 registration are underway. To prepare for the exercise, partners have held a series of meetings with community leaders, and conducted a community mobilization campaign explaining the purpose of the registration. Interpreters and interview clerks have been trained to identify people with special needs. More than 60 staff are involved in the exercise, which is scheduled to begin on 21 April.

In preparation for heavy rains expected in the coming weeks, a rapid NFI needs assessment was conducted in Jammam. Over 2,500 families were identified as in need of items such as plastic sheets, mats and blankets. As access will be limited during the rainy season, a rub hall has been erected for storage of the NFI kits and other pre-positioned relief. Adequate water supply remains a major challenge at the refugee sites. In Jammam, the water delivery rate remains below the SPHERE recommended threshold of 15-20 litres per person per day. To improve access to clean water plans are in place to install a pipeline to reduce trucking needs during the rains. In Doro, the water delivery rate is also below the recommended threshold. However, new drilling has commenced and it is expected that access to water will improve shortly. Because of the serious water challenges faced, a cholera contingency plan is being written and cholera treatment centers will be identified in Doro and Jammam.

Border conflict may worsen food security situation

Food security monitoring conducted by the Food Security and Livelihoods Cluster in February reveals a precarious food security situation along the border states of Greater Bahr el Ghazal, Warrap, Unity and Upper Nile. Recent escalating military activities along border areas with Sudan could displace and disrupt the livelihoods of 10-40 per cent of resident populations, according to the Cluster. These activities will curtail the flow of food and non-food supplies from Sudan, exacerbating food scarcity and increasing market prices, thereby worsening food insecurity. As a result, the number of severely food insecure people could increase. Partners are concerned that current caseloads could increase by at least 50 per cent along the border areas.

Humanitarian relief continues to people displaced from Abyei

The security situation in Abyei remains relatively calm, following a recent build-up of non-UN armed forces in the area. While troop numbers have reportedly now reduced, some 1,000 non-UN military personnel are still said to be present on the ground, according to the African Union. The movement of troops hampers the return of over 110,000 people displaced from the area. Only some 5,200 people have so far returned since fighting broke out in May 2011, according to the UN peacekeeping mission (UNISFA). As the rainy season is fast approaching, it may be unlikely that large scale returns will be possible before October at the earliest.

Humanitarian partners registered 1,120 people displaced in Rumaner in Abyei, who fled recent bombing in Unity State's Abiemnhom. Nutritional screening and distribution of non-food item kits is ongoing. Humanitarian aid also continues to people displaced from Abyei in Agok and other areas in South Sudan. So far in April, 41,200 people have been provided with food in Warrap, Northern and Western Bahr-el-Ghazal states. Material to construct three rub halls was delivered to Agok during the week. There are plans to construct eight storage facilities to support the repositioning of food before the rains start. In Agok, partners continued to carry out regular protection assessments in order to prepare a list of vulnerable and disabled persons who were missed out during the recently completed registration process in Agok and surrounding villages. Twenty community-based child protection networks are fully functional in Agok and surrounding area, and routine meetings are being held to strengthen the protective environment in the respective villages. Eleven child-friendly spaces in Agok and surroundings are also fully functional, benefitting over 2,000 children.

III. Returns to South Sudan

Insecurity hampers organized returns of South Sudanese

Arrivals of South Sudanese from Sudan continued at a slow pace during the week, largely because no organized returns have occurred since the last convoy of people arrived at the beginning of April. Spontaneous returns continued to trickle into Renk County in Upper Nile State at an estimated rate of 400-500 people each week. The barge movement of some 300 returnees from Renk to Bentiu remained on hold due to the border insecurity in Unity State. In Sudan's Kosti way station, a planned barge movement of returnees was also suspended. Air charters for extremely vulnerable people have also been affected by the tensions between the two countries, as there are now no direct flights operating from Khartoum to South Sudan.

Humanitarian partners continue to remain concerned about an estimated half a million South Sudanese remaining in Sudan, following the passing of the 8 April transitional period deadline for them to regularize their status. The Emergency Return Sector is closely monitoring the situation and working to advocate for the acceleration of documentation for South Sudanese in Sudan.

Returnee Overview by State*											
State:	Upper Nile	Unity	Warrap	Northern Bahr el Ghazal	Western Bahr el Ghazal	Lakes	Jonglei	Western Equatoria	Central Equatoria	Eastern Equatoria	Total
New Arrivals 11-17 April	48	0	23	173	25	0	34	0	0	0	303
Previous Total	60,532	88,016	33,879	71,543	24,482	17,474	21,197	2,297	43,174	11,761	374,355
Updated Total	60,580	88,016	33,902	71,716	24,507	17,474	21,231	2,297	43,174	11,761	374,658
Type of Returnee											
Government Assisted	25,322	32,462	17,244	24,470	10,388	15,703	16,090	1,575	27,063	9,940	180,257
Spontaneous	20,108	55,554	7,401	45,855	14,119	1,501	5,111	673	16,111	1,821	168,254
Unspecified	15,150	0	9,257	1,391	0	270	30	49	0	0	26,147

* Since 30 October 2010. Contains only verified IOM data unless otherwise noted. Figures are as of 17 April 2012.

Humanitarian partners move to decongest returnee sites in Renk

Following a verification exercise conducted by IOM from 9-16 April in Renk, some 17,500 returnees have been verified in the county, the largest concentration point for returnees in transit in South Sudan. This figure may change slightly when the statistical analysis of the verification data has been completed. Humanitarian partners plan to decongest Renk by providing onward transport assistance to final destinations in South Sudan, beginning next week. Fuel shortages in the county may have an impact on humanitarian activities, as returnee movements will increase in price as the price of fuel rises.

Humanitarian partners continued to provide assistance to the returnees at the new transit site, Payuar, which currently hosts close to 1,300 people. It is expected that all new arrivals to Renk will transfer to the site, as the three other camps in Renk are overcrowded. 1,500 newly arrived returnees to Renk were provided with food assistance during the week. Protection partners are concerned about the proximity of the site to housing of the South Sudan armed forces. However, local authorities believe that it is the most suitable land option at present.

IV. Humanitarian planning and coordination

Humanitarian community moves into crisis response mode

As a result of the sharp deterioration of the security situation in South Sudan the Humanitarian Country Team has moved from Readiness Mode to Crisis Response Mode of its Humanitarian Contingency Plan. The humanitarian community will focus on emergency response and operational continuity, crisis management, and staff health and safety. Emergency response activities are undertaken to respond to the crisis, and preparation are scaled up for potential large humanitarian impacts to the violence. Partners in the border states are working on streamlining preparedness plans.

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