SUDAN • ABYEI crisis
Situation Report No. 13
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United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
Coordination Saves Lives

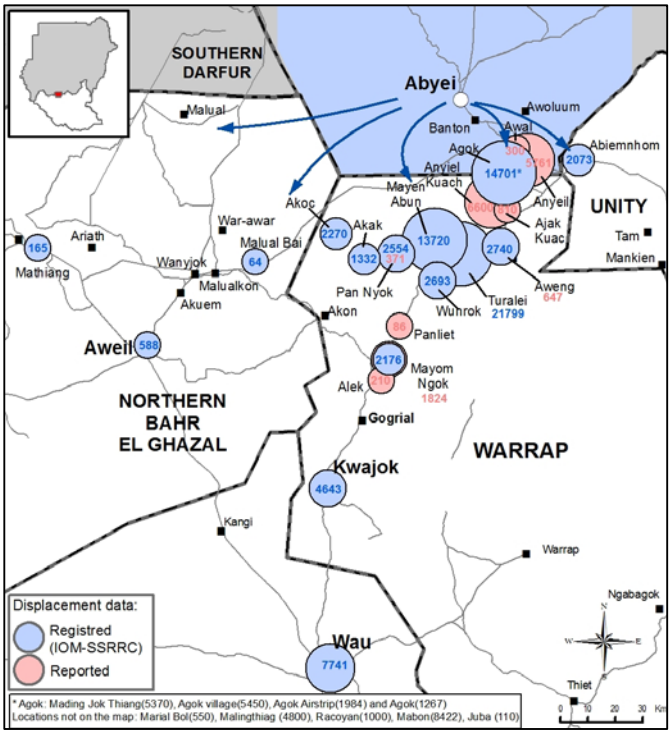
This report is produced by OCHA in collaboration with humanitarian partners. It covers the period from 10 to 16 June. Further reports on the situation will be included in the OCHA Sudan Weekly Humanitarian Bulletin.

I. HIGHLIGHTS/KEY PRIORITIES

- The situation in the wider Abyei area remains tense with clashes reported on 15 June.
- The estimated number of displaced people has risen to nearly 113,000.
- Humanitarian partners continue to assess and respond to emergency needs of the displaced population, while also focusing on medium-term needs.

II. Situation Overview

The situation in Abyei remains tense and unpredictable almost one month into the crisis. Clashes were reported between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) on 15 June, near the Banton Bridge. UNMIS confirmed the movement of SAF troops from Abyei town south towards the bridge and SPLA troops north from Agok and Twic County, but could not confirm if clashes occurred south of the river. Ten people were reportedly wounded in the fighting.



Also on 15 June, gunfire was reported from Agok and Kwajok towns, causing the displaced to flee to the bushes in alarm. The shooting was later reported to be related to the lunar eclipse, but as a result of a reported lack of information-sharing in advance of such events by local authorizes, one NGO temporarily relocated from Agok.

UN efforts to secure the release of 20-23 civilians in custody of SAF resulted in the successful release of five men and six women on 16 June. Six civilians were released to UNMIS and airlifted out of Abyei to Agok on 13 June.

As of 15 June, the total estimated number of persons displaced from the Abyei crisis stood at approximately 112,800. IOM and the Southern Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (SSRRC) continue to monitor population movement of the displaced, and have registered some 90,400 displaced persons to date. The majority of the displaced remain located in Twic County. Displaced persons have also continued to return to Agok and surrounding villages over the week. IOM continues to monitor the fluid movement of the displaced to ensure movements are captured accurately and people are not registered twice.

III. Humanitarian Needs and Response

FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS

To date, WFP has identified 101,153 displaced people from Abyei who have fled to the Abyei/Agok area, Warrap, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Western Bahr el Ghazal and Unity states. In Warrap State, WFP has provided one-month full ration to 57,699 displaced people and in the Abyei area, a total of 33,309 displaced people have been provided with two weeks rations of emergency food assistance. Insecurity continues to hamper WFP's efforts to deliver large quantities of food to Agok which becomes inaccessible when heavy rains come.

A food security and livelihoods cluster mission visited Wunrok, Mayan Abun, Turalei and Agok on 6-10 June to assess the food security situation for displaced people and returnees. The mission found that prices of staples such as sorghum have increased by 40 per cent in local markets, due in part to a significant reduction in sorghum supply. This is a cause for concern, in particular as rains in the next fortnight are expected to intensify rendering access roads impassable to Agok and reducing grain supply to the market. In Agok, significant vegetable production and second round planting of cereals normally take place along the banks of Bahr el Arab/River Kiir. Access to this area is reduced due to the on-going military operations on the northern side of the river. So far, no land for cultivation has been identified by authorities or local leaders for use by displaced people, though some displaced households can share the cultivation areas of their host families.

Cluster partners are conducting re-registration and verification of those households that do have access to land for distribution of agricultural inputs. Some 100 metric tons of sorghum and vegetable seeds is required for planting in the latter part of the season. There are two planting seasons, in June/July and September.

Fishing is a key source of food for displaced households which provide an additional source of food until the first harvest is ready. 1,800 fishing kits are in Kwajok and Turalei awaiting distribution to displaced households and returnees. The fishing season starts in the middle of the rainy season – around July – and peaks during the flood season around September. An additional 4,000 fishing kits are required to more fully support displaced households.

NON-FOOD ITEMS AND EMERGENCY SHELTER

Non-food item (NFI) and emergency shelter cluster partners have provided more than 14,900 NFI kits to displaced households in Warrap, Northern Bahr el Ghazal and the Agok area. In total, 82 per cent of registered displaced people have received assistance and the cluster considers the life-saving phase of the NFI assistance to be complete. For the remainder of the displaced people registered, the cluster is continuing to assess and distribute as needed, including tracking the movements of people between Twic County and Agok to ensure needs are met and to prevent duplication of distribution. In locations further away from Abyei such as Kwajok and Wau, assessment and distributions are ongoing. In Abiemnhom in Unity State, distributions to 465 households have not been done due to security constraints.

The cluster has scaled up its emergency assistance to include the provision of temporary shelter and a shelter strategy has been drafted to support emergency shelter needs of Abyei displaced people until the end of the rainy season around November. Displaced people that are either unable to return to their villages of origin or do not have financial or physical capacities to build short-term shelter are the priority in the strategy. Assessment of shelter needs is done as part of ongoing post-NFI distribution monitoring.

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) cluster partners reports approximately 60 per cent of the first phase response to the Abyei crisis in Twic County and Agok has been completed. The first phase has focused on ensuring essential access to water through assessing water availability, drilling and repairing boreholes and repairing or motorizing water pumping systems to increase water output. Simultaneously WASH partners have assessed and begun sanitation services including latrine construction and rehabilitation and deployment of community hygiene promoters to support water and sanitation interventions with good hygiene practice messaging. With the first phase of water and sanitation activities ongoing the cluster is now focusing on expanding sanitation and hygiene activities to help prevent the outbreak of disease, such as cholera.

HEALTH

WHO, UNICEF, GOAL, MSF, ADRA, NCA and World Vision remain the main implementing health partners providing emergency health services delivery and are following the fluid population movements.

Mass vaccination activities by various agency expanded programme of immunization services (EPI) teams have vaccinated 3,200 children. No disease outbreak has been reported, however, surveillance and outbreak response activities have been strengthened, including through the distribution of investigation kits for taking samples from suspected cases to implementing partners, so that rapid investigations and diagnosis may occur. Cold chain has been supported and strengthened by the EPI state team to ensure continuity of the routine EPI services.

NUTRITION

In the past week some 3,500 children were screened for malnutrition across Twic County with 55 admitted to nutrition programmes. In total, 750 children have been admitted to the two nutrition programmes in Mayen Abun and Turalei and 23 children have been admitted to the stabilisation facilities in Alek and Wunrok. In Abiemnhom in Unity, 100 children have been admitted to nutrition programmes run by World Relief.

To date, cluster partners report the most urgent needs have been met in Twic County through screening, referral to nutrition and health services. Blanket supplementary feeding has also been conducted across Twic County benefitting 6,000 children under the age of five. The situation in Agok remains fluid as people continue to return. Response efforts include screening and referral services although numbers of beneficiaries remain pending. A blanket supplementary feeding will commence next week.

Screening and referral services are also operating in Kwajok with 23 children admitted to nutrition programmes and stabilisation centres for treatment in the past week.

PROTECTION

The protection cluster continues to monitor new population movements to and from Twic County to ensure that movement is voluntary. Based on focus group discussions, movements/returns appear to be voluntary. In liaison with humanitarian partners, discussions are ongoing with SSRRC and representatives for the displaced on methods to identify displaced persons who have not yet benefitted from food or NFI assistance.

Following assessments in Turalei and Mayen Abun, concerns were raised regarding the safety of young girls in both host and displaced communities. INTERSOS is currently training nine people from a community based organization in counseling skills and needs assessments. The protection cluster has identified 104 children as separated from their parents or primary caregivers. Thirty eight children have been reunited and four more await reunification with parents who have been traced. Spontaneous reunifications continue to be observed. Protection activities are also underway in child friendly spaces in Mayan Abun and Turalei supported by Save the Children, UNICEF and a community based organization.

NRC has deployed a team of four persons, primarily engaged in vulnerability assessments in Mayan Abun and Turalei. INTERSOS continues to scale up its presence and has completed training 20 new psycho-social support staff on gender-based-violence, human rights, vulnerability assessment and identification of displaced people. The NRC and INTERSOS teams also support overall protection monitoring, specific needs identification, and identification and referral of displaced people who have not benefitted from assistance.

LOGISTICS

A second common transport convoy for the humanitarian community comprising 13 vehicles with fuel and NFIs is due to depart Juba on 17 June destined for Wunrok, Turalei and Kwajok in Warrap State as well as Malualkon and Aweil in Northern Bahr el Ghazal State and Wau in Western Bahr el Ghazal State. The availability and cost of fuel remains a critical challenge to the humanitarian operation.

Common storage warehouses have been erected in Wunrok and Turalei and another warehouse in Agok is under way and is expected to be completed in the coming week.

Following the assessment of airstrips in Twic County, spot repair work is due to begin on Alek airstrip in the coming week by UNMIS engineers and UNOPS to open the location to humanitarian flights.

EDUCATION

An education needs assessment was carried out from 7-9 June on three of the six payams/areas affected by displacement in Twic County. The priority needs identified include the provision of temporary learning spaces and school materials, life skills training and psychosocial support for displaced teachers, and salary payments for teachers. Schools in three payams in Twic County have reopened allowing more than 15,000 primary school students to return to class. Thirty-three teachers have been identified from the community of displaced people in Mayen Abun and Turalei and are assisting in the education response.

As the movement of the displaced continues to be fluid, planning education interventions remains challenging. However, as many of the displaced are beginning to return home to the Agok area, the number of children remaining displaced who require access to education will become clearer.

IV. Coordination

Humanitarian actors in Twic County are now meeting twice a week. In addition, humanitarian partners met in Agok today 16 June to continue discussions on priorities in the area including strengthened coordination.

V. Funding

OCHA is facilitating an interagency request to the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) for additional funding. Six UN agencies have submitted applications to support the ongoing humanitarian operation. The funding request, though made by UN agencies per CERF regulations, will also benefit front line NGOs. While the draft request is under review, agencies continue to liaise with donors directly to identify complementary funding sources. Funding requirements and the CERF proposal will be discussed at the next HCT Juba satellite meeting scheduled for early next week.

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