

*This report is issued by OCHA and is produced in collaboration with humanitarian partners.*

### **I. HIGHLIGHTS/KEY PRIORITIES**

- Fighting in Abyei town has continued with reports of SAF troops moving southwards of the town
- Most of the civilians have fled Abyei town. Preliminary reports indicate that thousands of people have crossed Bahr el Arab/ the Kiir River and are moving southwards towards Agok
- Insecurity and movement restrictions continue to impede humanitarian needs assessments in the area

## **II. Situation Overview**

### **Security**

Sporadic gunfire and mortar shelling continued in Abyei town throughout the day. The Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) entered Abyei town on the evening of 21 May and reportedly continue operations to secure control of the town. Other, unverified reports, claim SAF troops moved south of Abyei town. In Abyei, some shops were looted and tukuls burnt down.

On, 22 May President Omar Hassan al-Bashir issued a decree dissolving the Abyei Council. President al Bashir also issued a decree removing the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Abyei area as well as the Heads of the Five Administrations. In a press conference held in Juba today, the Government of Southern Sudan called on the international community to help restore calm and ensure that civilians are protected.

More NGO personnel have been relocated from Agok to Turalei and Wunrok in Twic County, Warrap State. Turalei is approximately 90 km south of Agok and Wunrok is 20 km southeast of Turalei.

UNMIS reports that since the evening of 21 May, 14 civilians have sought refuge in their base in Abyei town. Two civilians are being treated for injuries at the medical clinic in the base.

### **Population movements**

According to unverified preliminary reports, thousands of people have crossed Bahr el Arab/ the Kiir River at Banton Bridge and spread across multiple locations southwards towards Agok. Reports also indicate that people fled quickly with few belongings. Heavy rains on 21 May night and 22 May have slowed their movement.

There are also indications that some people are moving further southwards from Agok to Turalei or may be preparing to do so. Unease among the civilian population in Agok has risen, with reports of aircrafts circling over the Abyei Area and an increased SPLA presence. Reports that SAF troops are moving southwards of Abyei town have also caused concern. Some traders at the Agok market are reportedly closing their shops. It remains difficult to estimate the numbers of people who have left or intend to leave Agok.

On 22 May, a team comprised of WFP, UNHCR and UNICEF reached Mayan Abun, 50 km south of Abyei town. The team reported small numbers of people from Abyei. GOAL registered approximately 400 people in Mayan Abun.

## **III. Humanitarian Needs and Response**

Access in Abyei area remains difficult with humanitarian agencies still unable to conduct needs assessments due to the prevailing security situation.

In Agok, MSF are responding to the health needs of populations affected by the situation in Abyei. Between 20 and 21 May, the MSF hospital in Agok received 42 wounded people. Humanitarian partners are following up on needs of displaced people arriving in Agok and its surrounding areas. In line with preparedness planning, cluster lead and co-lead agencies in southern Sudan met on 22 May to initiate appropriate response action using pre-positioned supplies situated in Northern Bahr el Ghazal and Western Bahr el

Ghazal States. Cluster partners are assessing staffing levels and supply needs to inform operational planning.

Humanitarian actors and UNDSS are planning to deploy a team of aid workers to Agok with the support from the UNMIS Temporary Operating Base (TOB) in Agok. The team which includes OCHA, RCSO, WFP, UNHCR and UNICEF are currently in Wunrock and, security permitting, will continue to Agok on 23 May. The team aims to assess the needs of fleeing civilians as well as the people directly affected by events in Abyei to inform humanitarian response plans.

#### IV. Coordination

On 22 May, the Humanitarian Country Team met in Khartoum to discuss the Abyei situation. It was agreed that the highest priority is to determine the whereabouts of the civilian population that fled Abyei town and the surrounding villages. It was also agreed that all necessary measures should be taken to ensure that their protection and basic needs are met.

Also on 22 May, in southern Sudan, cluster lead and co-lead agencies met to confirm the location and levels of available pre-positioned supplies in the area, The Humanitarian Country Team Juba Satellite will meet on 23 May in Juba.

#### VI. Contact

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