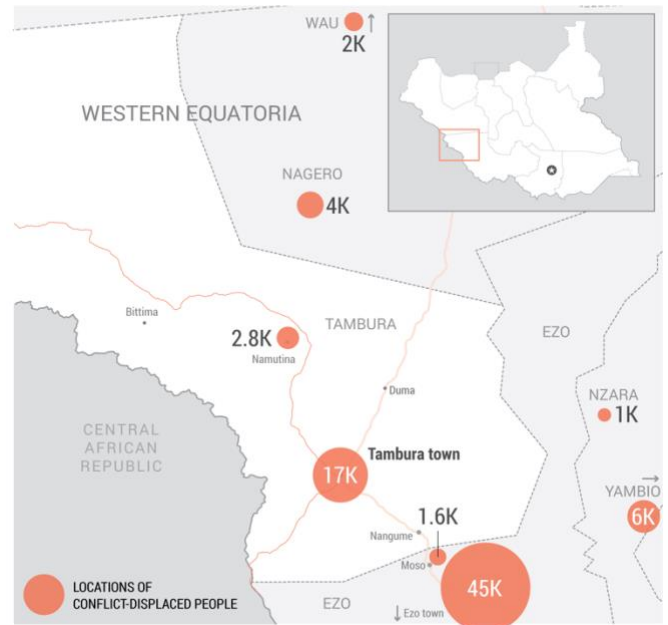


This update is produced by OCHA South Sudan in collaboration with humanitarian partners.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Close to 80,000 people have been displaced by fighting in Tambura County since June, with reports of civilians killed and wounded.
- Of the 80,000 people displaced, an estimated 45,000 people fled to Ezo County, with thousands of others moving to Yambio town, Nagero, Namutina, Wau, Nzara and Moso.
- Assessment of the needs of people in Ezo, Yambio, and Nzara was done. A response reached 6,000 people in Ezo with food assistance; protection, health and nutrition support; WASH and education services.
- Urgent funding is needed to support the ongoing response and to meet the increasing needs of people affected by the conflict.



SITUATION OVERVIEW

Since late June, sub-national violence in Tambura County, Western Equatoria has displaced nearly 80,000 people with reports of civilians killed and wounded. Many of the people displaced have fled to neighbouring Western Bahr el Ghazal State. An estimated 45,000 people have fled to Ezo County, with thousands of others moving to Yambio town, Nagero, Namutina, Wau, Nzara and Mosso. Reports have also been received of people fleeing to the Central African Republic.

There are reports of civilian deaths, with their bodies left to decompose on the outskirts of Tambura, without a proper burial. An increasing number of unaccompanied and separated children are being reported. People's homes and livelihoods have been destroyed by the recurring violence.

The president of South Sudan has formed a high-level committee to investigate the root cause of the Tambura conflict and to seek a solution and end to the violence.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

Humanitarian organizations in Tambura were able to conduct rapid needs assessments prior to the relocation of 30 aid workers in August and some 7,800 internally displaced people were reached with food assistance, health and nutrition services, shelter and non-food items, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and protection support. On 5 July, UNMISS established Temporary Operating Base (TOB) in Tambura to contribute to the protection of civilians, which supports a safe and conducive environment for the humanitarian response.

An inter-agency humanitarian mission to Ezo, Yambio and Nzara conducted between 3 and 10 September assessed the needs of the people displaced by the conflict in Tambura. The team also reached 6,000 people in Ezo with food assistance; protection, health and nutrition support; WASH and education services.

Some of the key findings included their urgent need for food and shelter. Their homes were burnt down by the armed groups and livelihoods destroyed. Some people were noted to have adopted negative coping strategies, including restricting food consumption, and eating treated seeds that were initially distributed for planting. Medical supplies are limited, and sanitation and hygiene conditions are deteriorating fast. Some of the conflict-displaced people have sought refuge in churches and schools, forcing the schools to close. Over 680 children have been separated from their parents, the majority unaccompanied as their parents were reportedly killed during the fighting. The nutrition status of children, pregnant and lactating mothers is likely to deteriorate unless emergency food assistance is provided to the displaced communities.

Some 19,000 conflict-displaced people in Ezo have been verified to date by an ongoing verification exercise. The team were able to distribute protection emergency shelter and non-food items to 1,000 of the most vulnerable households, including the elderly, disabled, pregnant and lactating mothers. More assistance is urgently needed as most people with specific needs remain unserved.

A WFP Rapid Response Mechanism and Biometric registration team is expected to arrive in Ezo in the coming days. There are also plans for an integrated protection and mainstream non-food items response in Ezo once the ongoing verification and delivery of supplies have concluded.

GAPS AND CHALLENGES

The violence must stop. Continuing intermittent fighting impacts the safe delivery of assistance and humanitarian organizations are unable to access vulnerable people in many areas of Tambura County. Aid workers are unable to return to Tambura County since their relocation in August. The few remaining aid workers face increasing challenges in accessing IDP locations due to the ongoing insecurity, rains and deteriorating road conditions. There are reports of armed groups looting medical supplies in Tambura town.

Given the context, there are concerns about the general health of the affected population and the broader communities. People have been displaced at the height of the rainy season, and their access to safe sanitation and hygiene support is limited. There are reports of people assumed missing being found dead, and their bodies left to decompose in the open. The physical and psychological impact on the population is devastating.

Partners are reporting limited resources with key gaps highlighted in shelter and NFIs and a need for psychosocial support experts. There is only enough food for 60,000 people for the next 15 days. Nutritional supplies such as high energy biscuits are currently unavailable at the State level. Medical supplies will be depleted within the next two months. Temporary learning spaces are required to accommodate children displaced by the conflict in existing educational institutions. Critical WASH supplies are expected to arrive from Juba next week.

Additional funding is urgently required to support the ongoing response and to meet the increasing needs of people affected by the conflict. Without extra funding, the suffering will continue.

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