

9 July 2013

SOUTH SUDAN

A comprehensive response to internal displacement is crucial

Two years after South Sudan's independence, the scale and seriousness of the country's internal displacement situation is often under-reported and remains a major concern. The recent violence in Jonglei has brought the issue to the fore, at least as far as that particular state is concerned, but it has also highlighted the many challenges involved in responding to complex and often entrenched displacement dynamics.

The complexity of the situation is reflected in the wildly varying data available. In Jonglei, for example, current estimates for the number of internally displaced people (IDPs) range from 11,000 to as many as 120,000. Challenges in terms of access and verification, combined with humanitarian mandates and structures that focus primarily on conflict-related displacement, mean that figures generally fail to paint a complete picture. Gauging the impact of repeated and protracted displacement is particularly difficult. Over five decades of conflict, much of the South Sudanese population has become highly mobile as a basic survival strategy, with families often splitting up in the process.

As such, any attempts at "in/out" counting are often at odds with the realities on the ground. Diverse and often long-term survival strategies and their impact on social structures also pose obvious challenges in defining what constitutes a durable solution in the South Sudanese context. This is arguably a basis for greater focus on IDPs' specific vulnerabilities rather than the geographical options of return, local integration and resettlement elsewhere.

Gaps in understanding translate into visible gaps in response. National authorities struggle to apply relevant frameworks, development is extremely limited and access to public services poor across large swaths of the country. Displacement remains primarily a humanitarian concern, resulting in a focus on people displaced by conflict and to a lesser extent flooding, with little attention given to other causes despite the clear infringements of human rights they involve.

A broader human rights-based approach drawing on the normative frameworks applicable to Africa could help to remedy gaps in both analysis and response. The last decade has seen the entry into force of the Great Lakes Pact, which contains protocols on displacement, and, while not yet ratified by South Sudan, more recently the Africa-wide Kampala Convention. Both instruments apply human rights approaches to clearly define roles and responsibilities across all phases and causes of displacement: preparation and prevention, including issues around land-grabbing and development; emergency response to support those fleeing both conflict and natural disasters; and recovery, helping communities affected to address the vulnerabilities caused by their displacement.



Displaced people in Gumuruk, 40km from Pibor town, South Sudan.
Photo: IRIN/Hannah McNeish, January 2012

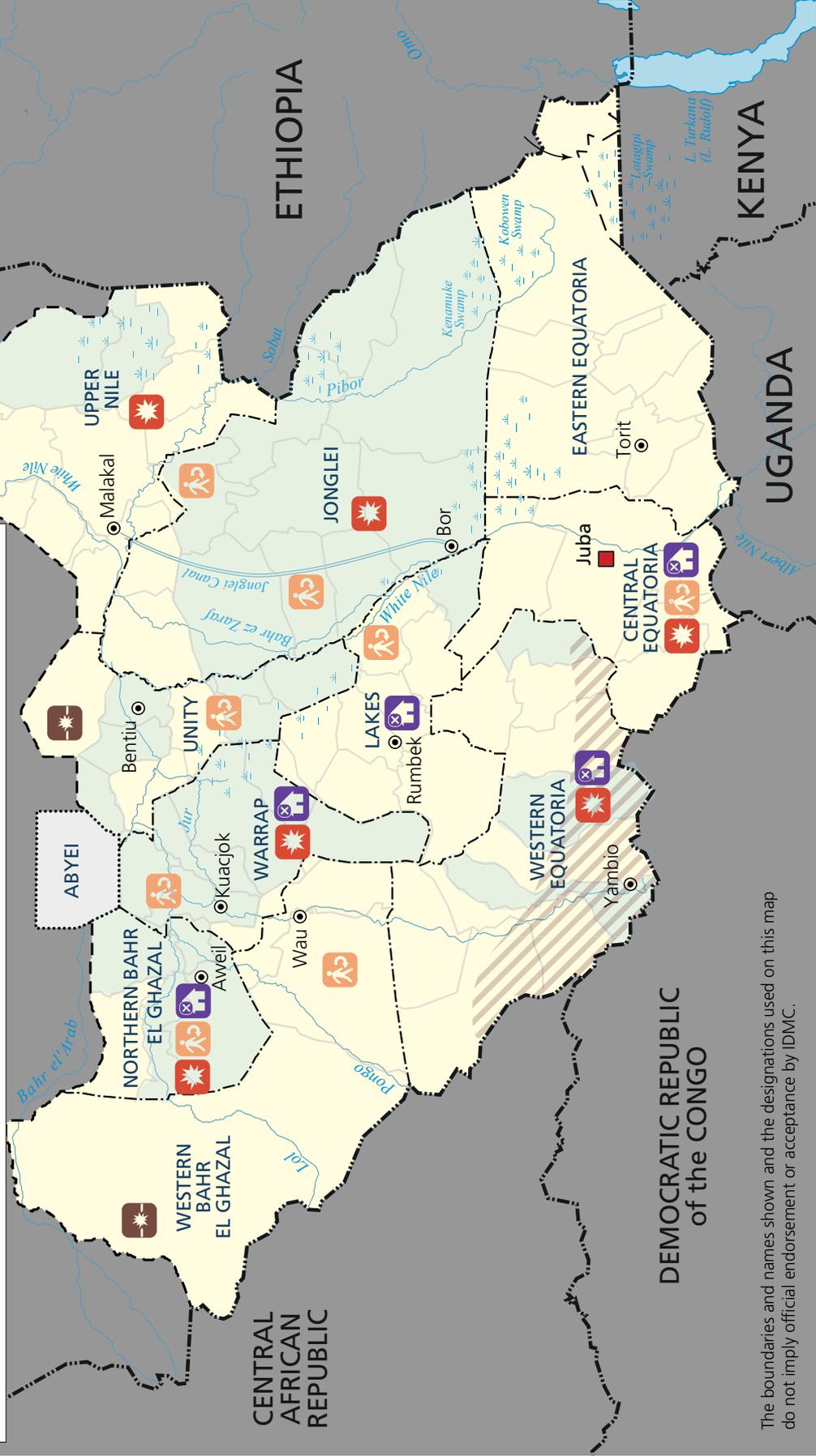
Displacement in South Sudan

25th June 2013



0 100 200 km

- National capital
- International boundary
- Undetermined boundary
- State boundary
- County boundary
- Disputed area
- Flooding (by county)
- LRA area
- Conflict (by state)
- Border disputes
- Development induced/forced eviction risk
- People of South Sudanese origin returning from Sudan



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IDMC.

Source: IDMC
 More maps are available at www.internal-displacement.org/maps

Such an approach could lead to a comprehensive analysis of the multiples causes of internal displacement in South Sudan, which in turn would provide a platform for a common understanding between the government and the humanitarian and development communities. It would also shape priorities for response across the board and help to improve understanding of what durable solutions might look like.

Background

South Sudan has a long history of underdevelopment, conflict and displacement. Conflict stemming primarily from power and wealth imbalances between northern and southern Sudan began in the run-up to independence from the British in 1956 ([UNMIS](#), n/d). A peace agreement signed in 1972 granted the south a degree of autonomy and for just over a decade Sudan as a whole enjoyed a period of relative stability. The agreement, however, did little to resolve underlying tensions. It was rescinded in 1983, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) took up arms and civil war broke out again ([International Crisis Group \(ICG\), November 2012](#)).

By the time the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed in 2005, an estimated two million people had been killed and four million internally displaced. A further 500,000 fled to other countries in the region. The signing of the CPA set the framework for a government of national unity in the north; an interim government for South Sudan; an agreement on the sharing of oil revenues; disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration campaigns; and democratic elections followed by a referendum on independence for the south ([International Crisis Group \(ICG\), November 2012](#)).

Independence, however, has not brought an end to conflict and displacement. Instead, outstanding border disputes have resulted in armed clashes

between the two states, and each has accused the other of supporting armed groups in their respective territories ([International Crisis Group \(ICG\), November 2012](#)). Indeed, internal conflict in South Sudan has become more visible since independence, and the fighting in Jonglei state can be seen as symptomatic of the challenges facing the country as a whole. Conflict dynamics are complex and include SPLM/A-led disarmament campaigns overlain with tribal and ethnic tensions, competition for access to natural resources and an overall lack of any real independence or peace dividend, national reconciliation or the building of a shared South Sudanese identity.

Externally, tensions with Sudan over unresolved issues in the CPA regarding borders and oil pipelines have resulted in huge drops in revenue over the past year and caused displacement in border areas. Fighting in Sudan's Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states has pushed huge numbers of refugees into South Sudan's northern states ([OCHA Humanitarian Snapshot December 2012](#)). Internally, the SPLM/A-led government is struggling on a number of levels: to absorb hundreds of thousands of South Sudanese returning from Sudan and neighbouring countries; to provide public services, transport and economic opportunities to the largely rural country while supporting the rapid urbanisation of some cities; to lead any genuine process of reconciliation and inclusive development; and to respond to the humanitarian needs of people displaced by multiple causes of conflict, flooding and, increasingly, development itself.

International support for South Sudan has been erratic, with many donors refusing to continue to fund development after it shut down the oil pipeline to Sudan in 2012 due to a dispute with Khartoum ([British House of Commons International Development Committee](#)). National revenues dropped by 98 per cent as a result and development plans were effectively suspended. External aid has since come primarily from hu-

humanitarian funding, the bulk of which has supported the returnee process and the refugee crisis in the northern states ([Reuters, July 2012](#)). As such, there has been little sustained engagement in comprehensive development since independence, and any response to internal displacement has been primarily reactive.

Displacement figures and challenges

Figures

Major gaps in data mean that the scale and nature of internal displacement in South Sudan is very difficult to assess. From a peak of more than four million internally displaced people (IDPs) at the height of the north-south civil war, the verified figure for people displaced by conflict in 2012 was 243,000, made up of 193,000 new IDPs and 50,000 people previously displaced by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) ([IDMC December 2012](#)). Since the IDP figures are calculated on a cumulative basis and there is no verifiable data on when and whether IDPs have returned home, annual estimates are based simply on a tally of new displacement for the year – these figures are not carried over for following years. Such figures are nevertheless used to determine response strategies and the allocation of resources, and form the basis for annual planning as laid out in the consolidated appeals process (CAP).

Over the first five months of 2013, as many as 170,000 people are thought to have been displaced in the country as a whole, but limited access to the areas affected means the figure is likely to be far from reliable ([MSF, June 2013](#), [UNHCR June 2013](#)). Official UN official estimates based primarily on conflict-induced displacement put the figure at just 55,763 (OCHA, June 2013), including as many as 28,000 displaced by cattle rustlers. In Jonglei, UN figures suggest that internal conflict has caused some 11,000 people to be displaced over the same period, based on the number of

people 'verified and assisted' (OCHA, June 2013). However, the UN recognises that such figures are likely to underestimate the real scale of displacement. Indeed, population census data from 2008, compared to current population levels in town centres across Jonglei, is possibly a better indication of the scale of displacement caused: In Pibor town itself, with a resident population of some 10,000, the population currently numbers just 900 people: Leukangole town is completely empty, despite a resident population of a further 10,000 (UN HCT, June 2013). Such examples highlight the difficulty in obtaining – and maintaining over time – accurate data, and it is likely the true scale of displacement is underestimated. This combined with a lack of information on returns makes it all but impossible to plan towards durable solutions.

Challenges

Humanitarian organisations track new displacement caused by conflict, but population movements caused by flooding are rarely captured. Similarly, registered returns of South Sudanese from the north are tracked, but other movements are largely invisible. These include the extent of voluntary returns from the north, voluntary returns of those displaced within South Sudan, those who return from the north but who are unable to reintegrate and move on elsewhere, and pastoral groups displaced by drought and other natural resource issues. Even the tracking of registered returns ends after six months. Given that some of the poorest families continue to move, resettle and re-migrate for many years after their initial displacement, there is very little understanding of the extent to which IDPs have been able to achieve durable solutions.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that large numbers of IDPs and returnees are living in vulnerable settings in urban areas, but there is little data to indicate the scale of the issue. IDPs and their host communities, often a complex mix of economic migrants, immigrants, older IDPs and voluntary

returnees, are extremely vulnerable. They are also at risk of arbitrary displacement as a result of land disputes caused by increasing investment and development ([ODI December 2011](#); [ODI May 2013](#)). Reliable information on their situation is, however, all but non-existent.

Such gaps are particularly visible in relation to those displaced within the South Sudan region during the civil war. Very little measurement of such displacement was undertaken and any available figures were often highly politicised. Gauging the impact of repeated and protracted displacement is particularly challenging. Over five decades of conflict, much of the South Sudanese population has become highly mobile as a basic survival strategy, with families often splitting up in the process. As such, any attempts at “in/out” counting are often at odds with the realities on the ground. Diverse and often long-term survival strategies and their impact on social structures also pose obvious challenges in defining what constitutes a durable solution in the South Sudanese context. This is arguably a basis for greater focus on IDPs’ specific vulnerabilities rather than the geographical options of return, local integration and resettlement elsewhere.

The overall lack of understanding of displacement dynamics prevents a comprehensive approach in terms of response. Instead, piecemeal interventions take place according to criteria stemming from humanitarian structures and mandates. For example, conflict-induced displacement merits a humanitarian response, while displacement caused by flooding is a seasonal phenomenon requiring disaster risk reduction, governance and development interventions. Similarly, development-induced and arbitrary displacement is a rule of law issue for the state authorities and is not appropriate for a humanitarian response. Such distinctions are valid and an important part of understanding wider displacement dynamics, but very often a failure to engage on the humanitarian level means no engagement at all, and cer-

tainly no engagement with the causes of displacement.

Causes of displacement

The multiple causes of displacement in South Sudan make for complex dynamics which frequently overlap, but some key drivers can be identified in the context of continuing instability and considerable development challenges for both national authorities and the international community.

Returns

The largest single displacement-related phenomenon is the return of people of South Sudanese origin from Sudan ([IOM](#)). This has taken place primarily through voluntary returns, particularly in the years preceding Independence but the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) has also led a considerable logistical operation of facilitated returns. The extent to which the process has laid the foundations for durable solutions is, however, unclear. The Four Freedoms agreement signed by Sudan and South Sudan aims to ensure freedom of movement within and between the two countries for the citizens of each, and under it people of South Sudanese origin should be able to remain in Khartoum if they wish ([African Arguments, October 2012](#)). Many have grown accustomed to, or have even been born in, the urban environment of the Khartoum suburbs and research has shown that, seven years after the signing of the CPA and despite South Sudanese independence, significant numbers would like to stay. Some families have opted to split, often with women heading households that return to South Sudan while the men remain in Sudanese towns to continue their work or education ([International Refugee Rights Initiative June 2013](#)). A number of factors, however, including harsh living conditions and direct harassment and discrimination,

mean that most feel they have little choice but to return to South Sudan despite the uncertainty that awaits them there ([Special Rapporteur on IDPs, May 2013](#)).

It is unclear how many people have returned voluntarily since independence, but latest figures suggest that around two million have done so since the signing of the CPA in 2005. There were around 155,000 assisted returns in 2012, and a further 50,000 have already arrived in 2013 ([IOM, Annual Report 2012](#), [OCHA June 2013](#)). The transit operation has faced challenges in terms of overcrowding at transit centres and border closures, and as many as 19,000 people remain stranded in transit stations within South Sudan ([OCHA May 2013](#)). There have also been delays in the delivery of luggage, and more recently the high cost of transport and the limited funding available to agencies has meant that some returnees have come under pressure to abandon their belongings altogether ([Guardian May 2013](#)). Many deliberately brought extra goods with them to convert into cash to maximise value. Overall, however, the operation has been a success.

Government policy is simply for returnees to go back to their rural places of origin, and land is typically offered free to encourage this. The cost of urban land, meantime, prevents many who might wish to settle in urban areas from doing so. As such, returnees' choice of final destination is restricted, and large numbers of people have been returned to places they may be unfamiliar with after lengthy displacement, where they have no social networks and which often lack any real service provision, transport or communications infrastructure ([IOM June 2013](#)). This has proved particularly problematic for families in which people from different areas of origin married during their displacement. Many returnees also lack the skills needed to establish rural livelihoods and are uncertain of the exact locations of land they may be able to reclaim.

Gaps in the current land policy have meant that a lack of demarcation, allocation and tenure security have been a significant impediment to return and reintegration. In Kuda, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) is currently working with around 2,000 people who remain in limbo because land has yet to be fully demarcated. Returnees are understandably reluctant to begin investing in land and livelihood development until demarcation is complete and their tenure secure.

Anecdotal information suggests that many returnees relocate to urban centres in search of better livelihoods and services, adding to existing pressure on burgeoning towns and cities with limited urban planning. It is very difficult, however, to verify the presence of returnees and IDPs in such areas, where they live among other vulnerable groups such as the urban poor ([ODI December 2011](#); [ODI May 2013](#)).

Returnees are a key vulnerable group. IOM has gone to considerable lengths to undertake a [village assessment survey](#) and this has gone some way to addressing the lack of post-return data, but access restrictions mean that while counties were surveyed on the basis of levels of return, Jonglei and Upper Nile States were excluded. The study does, nevertheless, make a substantial contribution towards building a better understanding of the obstacles returnees face in achieving a durable solution, particularly in terms of security and service provision ([IOM, June 2013](#)). That said, there is still no real vision on which to base comprehensive planning for long-term reintegration and reconciliation, within which returnees should be seen as people with specific needs alongside numerous other vulnerable groups.

Development

South Sudan's national land policy is currently pending parliamentary approval, and related

regulations are under review This offers real opportunities for the authorities to engage proactively with urbanisation, both as a step towards fostering durable solutions and to control the burgeoning informal development, which has considerable implications for urban housing land and property issues, not least tenure security.

In undertaking such a review, and in any subsequent urban planning, it is crucial that international and regional standards are applied if such initiatives are to avoid arbitrary displacement and evictions, including of IDPs and vulnerable returnees. Information on this issue is anecdotal, but there are indications that evictions and land grabs are increasingly causing forced displacement ([South Sudan News Agency, February 2012](#), [ODI 2010](#)). South Sudan has something of a history of displacement caused by large construction and agricultural projects, such as in Jonglei in the 1970s. Some important development projects are underway around urban centres, particularly Juba, and such efforts are to be applauded. There is, however, a considerable risk of their causing further displacement if, as is the case with most current urbanisation, they are undertaken without proper planning.

The issue of land grabs features prominently in the draft of the new land policy: "In many parts of the region, land holdings, large and small, urban and rural, are being allocated or illegally occupied without taking account of the rights of current land holders. These practices reflect a disregard and in some cases confusion over the proper land administrative authorities to engage in when applying for land. Some government officials have taken land allocation decisions without consulting communities and individuals who have ownership or use rights to the land in question" (Draft South Sudan land policy 2013). Holders of land rights are often pressured not to report such abuses, and the powerful interests involved in land grabs mean very little if anything is done in terms of restitution.

The lack of clarity over legal frameworks can make land allocation by the government less than transparent, and risks perpetuating corruption and abuse amongst the country's more powerful landowners. Weak accountability and justice mechanisms make the problem worse.

Conflict

There is little clear evidence that failed reintegration is fuelling conflict and further displacement, but there is no doubt that the lack of a peace dividend, sluggish development and limited national reconciliation are fuelling internal tensions in South Sudan. This is seen most clearly in Jonglei state, where complex conflict dynamics resulted in the displacement of at least 180,000 people in 2012, and as many as 120,000 more in the first five months of 2013 ([MSF, June 2013](#), [UNHCR June 2013](#)). Others have sought refuge in neighbouring countries, with as many as 63,496 refugees reported to have fled to Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda, 26,000 of them in 2013 ([UNHCR July 2013](#), [OCHA, June 2013](#)).

Limited access makes it difficult to gauge the true scale of displacement, but humanitarians and community leaders present in Jonglei report that entire towns have been deserted, which suggests that the true number of both IDPs and refugees may be far higher ([MSF, June 2013](#), [OCHA June 2013](#), [UN HCT June 2013](#)). It would appear that the situation in Jonglei is not unique, but representative of unresolved tensions that have similar potential to slide into conflict across the country. Around 4,400 people were displaced in Northern Bahr el-Ghazal and some 3,000 in Western Equatoria as of May 2013 ([OCHA cumulative incident-related displacement map June 2013](#)). In Upper Nile, as many as 28,000 people have been displaced in 2013 by cattle rustlers ([OCHA May 2013](#)).

There is a tendency to interpret the conflict in South Sudan as inter-communal and historical,

but the reality is more complex. Inter-communal competition for resources, rising bride prices and cattle rustling have played their part, but the large-scale displacement currently taking place in Jonglei is driven by broader issues that are often mutually reinforcing ([Conflict Trends, Issue 1 2012](#)). The militarisation of society during years of civil war has intensified the cycles of violence and retribution, and contributed to a breakdown in social cohesion. It has undermined generational structures in tribes where these traditionally played a role and destroyed the authority of traditional mechanisms for resolving disputes.

Proactive disarmament campaigns such as the one implemented by the SPLA in Jonglei have made tensions worse, not least as it has reportedly committed human rights abuses in the process ([Amnesty, October 2012](#); [HRW, 2012](#)). In the absence of any real national reconciliation process or attempt to build a shared South Sudanese identity as opposed to an SPLM/A identity ([Africa Spectrum, 2012](#)), there are concerns that there will be no accountability for the past and current abuses armed groups have inflicted on civilians, particularly those committed by the SPLA ([Reliefweb, June 2013](#)).

The emergence of the David Yau Yau militia has added to both the complexity and the scale of conflict and displacement in Jonglei. Sudan is believed to support the militia in tacit response to Juba's presumed support for the SPLM-North in the Sudanese states of South Kordofan and Blue Nile ([Small Arms Survey, March 2013](#)). This situation risks continuing the north-south war by proxy.

The ongoing tensions with Sudan over border areas have themselves contributed directly to displacement. Various clashes and stand-offs have caused both refugee flows into South Sudan and internal displacement away from the border area, prompting a complicated humanitarian response in some of the most inaccessible parts of the country. Cross-border attacks into Raja County

have displaced at least 3,000 people over the course of 2013 ([OCHA, June 2013](#))

The Uganda-based LRA carried out no new attacks in South Sudan in 2012, but around 50,000 people remain displaced from previous attacks. In Western Equatoria, the area where the LRA has historically been most active, people continue to live in fear of further violence. In Yambio, popular militias have been formed to repel any new attacks ([Enough Project 2010](#)).

Flooding and natural disasters

Natural disasters, particularly flooding, regularly cause displacement in South Sudan. Flooding is widespread during the regional rainy season, and between June and October 2012 heavy seasonal rains triggered severe flooding across 44 of the country's 79 counties. The UN estimated that three times as many people were affected than during the 2011 floods, with more than 340,000 people forced to flee. Jonglei was the worst-affected area, with 220,000 people displaced and over 90 per cent of roads left impassable. Inter-communal violence delayed humanitarian access to flooded villages ([OCHA South Sudan Humanitarian Update Oct-Dec 2012, IDMC Global Estimates 2012](#)). A number of refugee camps were also flooded, forcing the relocation of around 120,000 Sudanese refugees to a new site in the Gendrassa area ([Guardian, September 2012, IDMC Global Estimates 2012](#)). Such events highlight the importance of integrating natural hazards into risk analyses during site mapping.

Displacement caused by flooding cannot be considered separately from the broader displacement situation. Similarly, displacement associated with access to natural resources such as grazing land and water, and conflict caused by issues such as cattle rustling, cannot be addressed as stand-alone issues, despite their seasonal and relatively predictable nature.

Protection and assistance needs

Displacement in South Sudan is primarily a protection concern. It extends far beyond the material needs of the newly displaced - such as shelter food, non-food items and water - and is closely linked to the limited application of legal frameworks and a lack of respect for human rights during all phases of displacement. The protection of civilians is the primary concern in Jonglei, where displacement caused by arbitrary killings, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and the destruction of property has been documented with alarming regularity over the past 18 months ([Amnesty, October 2012](#), [HRW, 2012](#), WASH cluster [ISWG statement May 2013](#)). Women and children are particularly vulnerable, with reports of children being used as weapons of war in inter-communal violence and a rise in the number of early forced marriages ([UNMISS, April 2013](#)).

There are also important, if less urgent, protection concerns stemming from a lack of investment in preparedness for displacement. This is evident in the current gaps in response to those displaced by flooding and competition over natural resources. Arbitrary displacement, the appropriation of land and forced evictions caused by development are also clear human rights abuses, but to date there has been little or no response. Gaps in the application of legal frameworks and procedures mean those affected have few options in terms of recourse to justice, mediation or compensation. Vulnerable groups, and women in particular, are often disproportionately affected, given their weaker inheritance and land rights.

The focus to date on emergency response has meant limited attention has been given to social protection issues, which are crucial in ensuring sustained engagement with the vulnerabilities that displacement causes. Experience elsewhere suggests that the most recently displaced are not always the most vulnerable, and as such a proactive protection response based on the comprehensive mapping of

displacement-related vulnerabilities and a human rights-based approach are paramount.

The protection gaps in terms of durable solutions are particularly clear in the current return and reintegration response. Access to civil documentation and identity papers remains a key challenge for many IDPs and returning refugees, particularly for those living in South Sudan's many border communities. As such, statelessness remains a risk as a result of the country's independence ([BBC April 2012](#)). The two states have signed agreements that aim to ensure no one previously holding Sudanese citizenship would find themselves stateless, but gaps in implementation and practical constraints in terms of access have caused problems. This is the case both in Khartoum, where there are also increasing reports of harassment and social exclusion, and upon return to the south. Documentation issues are particularly relevant in terms of landlessness and tenure security, and here again gaps in formal mechanisms for mediation and compensation mean few options are available for those affected to raise their concerns with the relevant authorities.

National and international response

Humanitarian response

The response to internal displacement continues to be overshadowed by international tensions with Sudan and the huge, and costly, refugee response in the border areas. This is reflected in funding priorities, which saw the protection cluster funded at just 32% during 2012 and a reduction in funding for community-based mechanisms and softer activities such as training in 2013. The gender-based violence (GBV) sub-cluster has had to reduce the number of victims it hopes to target from 150,000 to just 9,000, because the programme was designed on the assumption that other parties would be funded at the same time for training and awareness raising.

Funding for the United Nations Mission to South Sudan (UNMISS) has increased and its role in the protection of civilians is ambitious, but results so far have been limited ([NUPI, 2011](#), [Clingendael CRU, January 2013](#)). Evidence from elsewhere has shown that military protection alone is not enough and that funding for softer aspects is also crucial if community resilience is to be strengthened. Such activities are generally better carried out by the humanitarian community, which has expertise in these areas. A recent report by Refugees International found that the rollout of UNMISS women's protection advisors (WPAs) was marked by recruitment delays and training gaps, which has led to poor practice and in some cases has put victims of sexual violence in danger ([RI June 2013](#)).

Some donors have raised the possibility of mainstreaming protection further, but such an approach risks reducing the already limited technical capacity dedicated to protection even further. Protection needs to be viewed through a stronger "do no harm" or conflict-sensitive lens, and dedicated expertise and capacity is still required to do so in the majority of agencies. It is also crucial for the protection cluster to lobby for the leadership of the humanitarian response to be more proactive and strategic, and to take such an approach itself. The development of a multi-year strategy which includes planning for durable solutions, for example, could form the basis for the cluster to play a key bridging role. Other technical clusters should also be encouraged to play a stronger strategic role in prioritising and advocacy.

Development response

The current response to internal displacement, both national and international, continues to treat the issue as purely humanitarian. This is partly linked to structural constraints based on mandates, funding and coordination mechanisms, but it is primarily the result of a poor understanding of displacement and a lack of engagement by the development sector. The implications are ex-

tremely worrying. Recent exchanges between the humanitarian community and the government over who might be responsible for people considered vulnerable as a result of their displacement in the 1990s put the question of durable solutions squarely on the table, and highlight how much more engaged both the government and the development sector need to be.

The Brookings framework for national responsibility ([2005](#)) emphasises the importance of the state's leadership in responding to displacement, but the international community clearly has an important role to play, through both development support and humanitarian expertise, while the South Sudanese authorities improve their capacity to engage.

Recent efforts by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) to begin mapping flood plains in Northern Bahr el-Ghazal are a good example of trying to better understand the links between seasonal flooding and displacement as a coping mechanism. Such analysis could form the basis for informed decisions about how best to respond, applying lessons learned from the broader region in disaster risk reduction programming and working with pastoralist communities. Based on some successes to date related to cattle rustling, recent UNMISS efforts to establish an early warning system for the protection of civilians could be elaborated upon considerably in order to promote engagement before displacement rather than response afterwards ([Better World Campaign, January 2013](#)). This is in line with calls from others working in conflict reduction in South Sudan for the improved mapping of vulnerabilities and perhaps even behavioural assessments of population movements - practical examples of a "do no harm" approach to programming that could also contribute to informing development responses.

Data collection and analysis remain key areas of weakness. Humanitarian mechanisms are either

not present or not extensive enough for a comprehensive analysis of displacement to be undertaken, and the development sector and national authorities must also engage more if greater understanding - particularly in terms of durable solutions - is to be gained. Data must be collected in ways compatible with core humanitarian principles.

Such analysis would help to establish greater clarity over what falls under humanitarian mandates, and this in turn would allow those involved in the response to engage on the clear basis of humanitarian principles, including in instances where the role of national authorities has to date created challenges in this sense ([HPN issue on South Sudan, May 2013](#)). It would also facilitate stronger linkages between the humanitarian response and development planning, based on a clear and shared understanding of the breadth and complexity of displacement issues and the roles and responsibilities of the entities involved in responding to it. Such an approach might be reflected, for example, in greater consultation with humanitarians and the undertaking of a humanitarian analysis of displacement-related vulnerabilities in the roll-out of the World Bank-funded Local Governance Through Service Delivery programme. The initiative clearly offers considerable scope for addressing gaps in the existing return and reintegration strategy for returnees, but to date only limited consultation of this type has taken place.

Donors

Donors have a large part to play in facilitating such processes. Erratic engagement by key partners to date has resulted in short-sighted investments that prioritise the provision of material goods over the arguably more challenging development aspects of displacement. Some key partners have even used aid as political leverage, in clear contradiction of the principles of the New Deal for Fragile States (see [here](#) for the 'New Deal Snapshot'). In many sectors, such as education, development donors (and often national authori-

ties) do not engage regularly with the relevant coordination mechanisms. Doing so would be a first step to ensuring that donors do not create overlaps between sectors or between the humanitarian and development responses. The basis for such engagement should be a long-term commitment to South Sudan which is not influenced by changes to context and/or political interests, and the New Deal compact is a clear opportunity for this. Such a commitment would also enable donors to engage more constructively with the South Sudanese authorities and establish a stronger partnership as the basis for more honest criticism, with a view to helping them address weaknesses.

Donors also have a large part to play in encouraging and funding international partners, and international NGOs in particular, to work with local organisations. In doing so, they would transfer skills, build local capacity and promote national civil society, rather than centralising skills within their own operations. Such an approach would be more conducive to building resilience, but it would also require long-term engagement and funding.

National authorities

National authorities face considerable challenges given South Sudan's complex and decentralised governance structures. The country has, however, acceded to the Great Lakes Pact and with it the protocols relevant to internal displacement. It has not yet signed the Kampala Convention, but much of the convention's content is reflected in the Great Lakes protocols. As such, a clear legal framework exists to inform the national authorities' engagement with all aspects of internal displacement, and the international community should work to support this. The authorities have made considerable efforts, for example, to engage in the return process, but gaps in comprehensive data and the collective understanding of displacement have hampered an effective response. The sheer geographical scale of South Sudan and

the associated governance challenges have also proved obstacles. Capacity concerns have meant the government has struggled to fulfil leadership roles in the many development sector coordination groups. This has been further complicated by key donors' inconsistent engagement, which has damaged working relations and resulted in a loss of momentum, particularly in development planning.

Durable solutions start before displacement

Preparedness for displacement, its prevention and the achievement of durable solutions in its aftermath can only take place through development, though such processes do not replace the need for dedicated humanitarian capacity to undertake emergency response. As such, it is encouraging that the UN in South Sudan has repeatedly called for parallel humanitarian and development planning and response ([UN RC/HC May 2013](#)). Better integration of the Humanitarian Country Team and the UN Country Team would be a first step towards ensuring more appropriate and better targeted interventions once humanitarians are no longer the primary responders. Forward thinking and considerable investment in anticipating displacement would also be paramount, given the average lead times for response in development programming.

To date there is, however, no clear strategy or roadmap for the establishment and leadership of such a parallel process. Government engagement would be crucial and UN leadership essential, particularly in improving links between aid coordination structures in order to facilitate dialogue and integration between the humanitarian and development sectors.

A number of policy and legal frameworks could be used to shape such a strategy. The IASC Framework on Durable Solutions to Internal

Displacement clearly lays out the issues of concern at all stages of displacement, while the UN Secretary-General's 2011 decision on Ending Displacement in the Aftermath of Conflict offers both guidance in terms of content for a durable solutions strategy and a useful tool for monitoring agency roles, responsibilities and accountability. The Great Lakes protocols provide extensive guidance within legal frameworks developed in response to African displacement.

Such a strategy would enable a holistic approach to support for returning IDPs and refugees in their search for durable solutions, to preparing for and preventing all types of conflict-related displacement and to the undertaking of emergency responses in times of crisis. The role of the government in leading the development of such a vision is crucial, supported by the sustained engagement of key partners according to the principles of the New Deal.

Neither Sudan's nor South Sudan's figures take into account the number of people displaced in the disputed Abyei Area, where more than 100,000 people were displaced following an incursion by the Sudanese Armed Forces in June 2011. Of these, between 48,000 and 65,000 people remain displaced (OCHA May 2013, South Sudan protection cluster, June 2013). Around 27,000 people are believed to have returned to their places of origin since early 2012, and thousands more commute regularly between their home areas and their places of refuge. Displacement dynamics in the area are complex and include pendular displacement, return and nomadic migration. Gaps in governance, infrastructure, housing, basic services and livelihood opportunities continue to hamper recovery and the risk of inter-communal violence linked to seasonal migration and resources remains. A referendum on the final status of Abyei is currently scheduled for October 2013. Without a political agreement on Abyei's disputed status, those affected are unlikely to find durable solutions even if they do return.

About the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) is a world leader in the monitoring and analysis of the causes, effects and responses to internal displacement. IDMC advocates for better responses to the needs of the millions of people worldwide who are displaced within their own countries as a consequence of conflict, generalised violence, human rights violations, and natural or man-made disasters. It is also at the forefront of efforts to promote greater respect for the basic rights of internally displaced people (IDPs). IDMC is part of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC).

What we do:

- Promote appropriate responses to internal displacement through targeted advocacy
- Provide timely, accessible and relevant information on internal displacement worldwide
- Develop research and analysis to help shape policies and practices that have positive outcomes for IDPs
- Provide training and support to country-based policy-makers and practitioners with a responsibility to protect IDPs

Who do we target?

IDMC is best placed to effect positive change for IDPs through advocacy to influence the decisions and practices of duty bearers and all those with a responsibility or capacity to promote or fulfil the rights of IDPs.

How do we operate?

As information on internal displacement is often controversial and politically sensitive, IDMC must continue to operate and be seen to operate as an independent and effective global monitor of this widespread phenomenon.

IDMC has become an indispensable resource for anyone seeking impartial data and analysis on internal displacement, independent of political or operational considerations. www.internal-displacement.org

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