Submission to the United Nations Secretary-General High Level Panel on Internal Displacement

Results of Consultations with Internally Displaced and Host Community – South Sudan

(September 2020)

High Level Panel Consultations Leer TPA/ UNHCR

"We want peace in South Sudan. That is our recommendation as South Sudanese citizens."

Focus Group Discussion, Bentiu PoC, IOM August 2020

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Acknowledgements

Background information

Globally, internal displacement continues to rise rapidly on an annual basis. The 2019 annual report prepared by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC) indicates that in 2019, conflict and disasters triggered a total of 33.4 million new displacements across 145 countries and territories. Of these, 8.5 million new conflict displacements were recorded in 50 countries and 24.9 million new disaster displacements in 140 countries. By December 2019, 50.8 million IDPs remained displaced globally due to conflict, violence and disasters.

South Sudan is one of the countries with the highest sporadic internal displacement rates and forced migration[1] as the country continues to experience worsening humanitarian crisis characterized by violent armed clashes between different rebel groups, intercommunal violence (ICV), widespread insecurity, lack of services and disasters (e.g. floods); resulting in displacements of civilians, killing, looting, destruction of property and gross violation of human rights. The situation is further exacerbated by various impediments that continue to hinder humanitarian access and disruption of planned operations by humanitarian actors.

The cumulative effects of years of protracted conflict, natural disasters, persistent food insecurity, economic decline including chronic vulnerabilities and lack of essential services have affected the whole population, leaving about 7.5 million people (more than two-thirds of the population) in need of humanitarian assistance (South Sudan Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020).

Relatedly, conflict, violence, insecurity and disasters are leading causes of ongoing humanitarian crisis and displacement in South Sudan. Recent estimates indicate 1.60 million South Sudanese are internally displaced (IDPs) (IOM DTM, March 2020), 2.2 million are refugees in the neighbouring countries of Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo (UNHCR, January 2020). The country is also hosting 299,815 refugees from other countries. More than a half of country's population (6.48 million) are predicted to be facing food insecurity during the lean season (May-July 2020, IPC Projections 2020) whilst more than a million might experience severe food insecurity (IPC 4, May-July 2020). Additionally, 292,300 children under five to be suffering from Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) and more than one million children under five suffering from Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM).

In September 2018, the Government and the key opposition leaders signed the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS). The agreement has led to a reduction in national-level hostilities between principles to the deal. However, the implementation of the peace process has been delayed, in particular, the establishment of governance structures and the training of joint military forces; one of the main prerequisites for sustainable peace. Whilst the latter has not yet been achieved, the national cabinet for the Transitional Government of National Unity was formed on 22 February 2020 (after two deadline extensions). Appointments for local governance structures are still pending, contributing to violent contestation over power at the sub-national level and an uptick in localized conflict across the country. In all three greater regions of South Sudan, there has been escalating conflict. In Jonglei, Lakes and Warrap States, for instances, sub-national and localized violence has been widespread. Armed conflict between State security forces and opposition armed groups (e.g. National Salvation Front – NAS) has persisted in the Equatoria Region where both, Government and Opposition forces continue to clash with non-signatories to the agreement.

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[1] Source: ACT Alliance Appeal, SSD181.

Impact of COVID- 19

As of 26 September 2020, the Ministry of Health reported 2,692 known cases of COVID-19 in the country. The novel coronavirus has caused a death of 49 individuals so far, whilst 1,438 recovered. The data is coming from a total of 28,023 tests run between April and September 2020. A lack of testing capacity has remained among the key challenges since the onset of the pandemic, as well as the reality that field capacity is minimal and sample processing is centralized in Juba. The Government established the High Level Task Force (HLTF) in mid-March to coordinate COVID-19 preparedness and response activities. On 24 March, HLTF initiated closure of all airports and land borders, followed by internal movement restrictions, curfew, closure of schools, halt in activities in the service sector and limitation of public gatherings. The measures have had a serious impact on the import dependant economy and livelihoods of people predominantly relient on daily labour and small trade leading to a relaxation of measures at the end of April. Cross-border movement has been significantly affected by the border closure in March, however, over time, people started using alternative routes located along porous borders that are difficult to control.

Due to the nature of the virus spread, congested displacement sites have become high risk areas. Hence, the Diocesan Major Response Team on COVID-19 requested to close Wau collective centers hosting more than 3,500 IDPs in total. Reduced footprint of UNMISS and UNPOL patrols within Protection of Civilians (PoC) sites has caused concerns among IDPs due an increase in security incidents, in particular within Malakal and Bentiu PoC. Further on, service provision within sites has been affected by various factors (reduction in the footprint within the sites, bureaucratic impediments related to COVID-19 travel clearances and interruption in supply chains).

Displacement Situation within South Sudan

Protracted conflict, natural disasters, episodes of sub-national and intercommunal violence have left more than 1.60 million South Sudanese nationals displaced across all 78 counties. An estimated 58 per cent of IDPs are residing in Upper Nile (233,814), Warrap (246,697), Unity (225,963) and Central Equatoria (220,847). The three-quarters of IDPs are residing with host communities, whilst the remaining (+407,000) stay in camps or camp-like settings. As of early September 2020, some 167,856 IDPs were hosted within the UNMISS protected Protection of Civilians (PoC) sites in Bentiu, Juba, Wau, Malakal and Bor (IOM DTM Biometric Registration, September 2020[2]). The sites are protected by UNMISS per its Security Council mandate and serviced by humanitarian organizations. As of early September 2020, UNMISS has advanced plans for re-designation of PoC sites into displacement sites governed by national authorities. By mid-September the withdrawal of UNMISS and UNPOL forces had already started in Wau PoC AA and Bor PoC, raising concerns by IDPs and humanitarian partners over the handover and continuation of service provision within the sites. Bor site was re-designated from protection of civilian site (POC) to an IDP site on 22 September 2020.

According to protection profiling exercises conducted in 2018 (Bor POC, Juba POC 1 and Juba POC 3), 2019 (Malakal POC, Malakal POC joint Report with IOM; Bentiu POC, Bentiu Urban Setting (Rubkona County) and in 2020 (Juba PoC 1, Juba POC 3, and Wau), an average of 63 per cent of the IDPs living inside PoC sites did not consider or even discuss leaving the sites and returning home. The vast majority cite security concerns as the main reason for not considering or discussing leaving the displacement sites, followed by scarcity of food (UNHCR/IOM Bentiu, Bor and Juba PoC site populations, HNO 2020) and houses having been destroyed (particularly IDPs in Wau PoC site). The recent comprehensive intention survey conducted in Wau PoC AA and five collective centres in December 2019 and January

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[2] Breakdown per site available upon request at southsudandtm@iom.int .

2020 (IOM DTM 2020) corroborated the importance of the perception of security in the return-decision making process. More than a third of the residents across assessed sites who expressed intention to leave, were uncertain about when this would happen, reflecting the widespread uncertainty about the peace process and the formation of the Transitional Government of National Unity. On average, 42 per cent of respondents intended to pay for the trip themselves, and a third expected to rely on humanitarian support. Notably, women were seen to be the most prone to having issues, risks, or concerns at destinations preventing return movements. Focus group discussions as part of the survey evidenced that respondents seemed to rely on their own perception of safety and security, at the local level instead of public, political pronouncements with respect to the national-level peace process, to make the decision to leave.[3]

A lack of basic services in many areas of potential return offers limited options for accessing services outside the sites, both rural and urban areas. It perpetuates a situation in which people's opportunities to improve livelihoods and living standards remain diminished, posing obstacles to recovery from the crisis and pursuing durable solutions. Ongoing violence in different parts of the country is exposing IDPs to renewed displacement and limits opportunities for those who intend to return, while simultaneously placing pressure onto host communities to share scarce resources with displaced population and hindering attempts for comprehensive development, transition and recovery programs that could bring long term improvements in infrastructure and service availability across the country.

Available data on reasons for displacement indicates that 70 per cent of the 1.6 mil. IDPs were displaced to assessed locations due to conflict, 21 per cent due to communal clashes and 4 per cent due to natural disasters. Nevertheless, the dominant reason for displacement varies when looking at the time of displacement. The recent increase in sub-national violence and inter-communal clashes led to that being the main reason for displacement for 65 per cent of 127,840 IDPs who arrived at assessed locations in 2019, whereas for those who got displaced in previous years, conflict factors as the main reason. This trend reflects how different displacement triggers impact the duration of displacement. Communal clashes[4] and natural disasters tend to produce shorter-term displacement, whilst conflict often leads to protracted displacement as communities are not able to return to their habitual residence due to destroyed/looted/damaged properties, houses or unsolved land and property issues.

In addition to the 1.6 mil internally displaced, recent episodes of violence and flooding have caused the displacement of another 242,000 individuals between April and end of August 2020, mainly across Warrap, Jonglei and Lakes states (IOM DTM, Event Tracking, September 2020[5]). Jonglei is significantly affected, and months of violence followed by the rise in the River Nile have also caused movement of population from Twic East and Duk Padiet towards Juba. By mid-September 2020, some 32,000 IDPs were residing in 5 collective centres across Juba, as well as, 59,400 in Bor South; 42,886 in Twic East; 56,354 in Duk; 57,000 in Ayod; 95,838 in Greater Pibor and 6,000 in Pochalla mainly women and children in need of immediate humanitarian assistance.

Despite the progress at the political level in addressing the tensions between the Government and Opposition, comprehensive and multi-layered interventions are needed to create a conducive environment for safe and sustainable returns of IDPs to their habitual residences and ultimately better prevent, respond, and achieve durable solutions to internal displacement. Humanitarian partners in South Sudan are committed to continue supporting displaced population and strengthen collaboration with various stakeholders to work towards humanitarian-peace-development nexus. The series of focus group discussions organized to contribute to the consultation process initiated by the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on IDPs is one of such attempts that brought agencies together to strengthen and ensure evidence-based interventions for the benefit of South Sudanese communities.

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[3] The same approach remained and was evident across the focus group discussions conducted for the purpose of this report. See *Key highlights*.
[4] The term "communal clashes" refers to various incidents of inter-communal and sub-national/localized violence whereas "conflict" refers to nation-wide violence with direct and evident engagement of the Government and the Opposition forces.
[5] Data available upon request at southsudandtm@iom.int .

Focus group discussion with women representatives, Juba PoC 3, August 2020/IOM

Methodology

Methodology on the consultations with Affected Communities in South Sudan

The consultation process with affected communities in South Sudan for the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement (HLP on IDP) was based on the series of focus group discussions and key informant interviews (KII), as recommended by the UN Secretariat. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) is a method for collecting qualitative data that gathers community individuals together to discuss a specific topic. Questions were open-ended, intending to stimulate an informal discussion with participants to understand their views on the eight thematic areas that will help the Panel to identify concrete recommendations on how to better prevent, respond and achieve solutions to internal displacement. The criterion of inclusivity guided selection of participants. This ensured information captured was indicative of the views of internally displaced population and host communities across South Sudan. In line with the Panel's recommendations, teams consulted a variety of population sub-groups in order to obtain nuanced feedback acknowledging that experiences, needs and challenges related to displacement differ. These groupings included: women, men, elderly, youth, minority groups, disabled groups, youth and the existing community leadership structures.

Timelines

The planning process for the consultations, finalization of planning documents by agencies, division of tasks and development of tools begun in early July. Community consultations were carried out in South Sudan by CARE International, Danish Refugee Council, NCA-ACT Alliance, International Organization for Migration (IOM), Plan International and UNHCR from 27 August to 22 September 2020. Consolidation of notes, completion of outputs and submission to Panel by the focal points from UNHCR and IOM occurred between 14 to 30 September 2020. A presentation of the key findings is planned with key South Sudan working groups and clusters after approval is received from the Panel.

Data Collection

As guided by the panel themes and questionnaire, qualitative data was collected from the respondents across the different states in South Sudan. Organizations participating in the collection of data included: UNHCR, IOM, CARE International, Danish Refugee Council (DRC), Plan International and NCA-ACT Alliance. Staff members from above agencies collected primary data in collaboration with their specific implementing partners such as Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), Humanitarian Development Consortium (HDC), Humanity & Inclusion (HI), International Rescue Committee (IRC), Adventist Development and Relief Agency International (ADRA). Questionnaires were filled in through focus group discussions and key informant interviews, whilst participants were selected based on their status, these being host communities (also comprising returnees) and IDPs further desegregated by age, gender and other diversity considerations to ensure raw data reflected the experiences and perspectives of various population groups. This approach will allow for an analysis of the perceptions and aspirations of the groups and recommendations on the way forward. The discussions also included topics related to the effective response to displacement in addition to: (i) NGOs and UN agencies feedback in supporting longer-term recovery and (ii) development and engagement of affected population in decision-making processes. Communities across the right out of the ten currently recognized states in South Sudan were included in the process, along with the Abyei Administrative Area[6]. Consultations in the following locations were conducted:

- Central Equatoria State (Juba County: Juba PoC 1 and PoC 3, Juba Collective Sites, Juba Urban Area, Yei – Yei Town)
- Eastern Equatoria (Kapoeta East and Torit)
- Jonglei (Bor South)
- Upper Nile (Malakal POC, Aburoc Collective Site, Kodok, Tonga, Lul, Nyalwalg, Baliet, Maiwut – Pagak)
- Unity (Rubkona – Bentiu PoC, Bentiu Town, Leer, Koch)
- Warrap (Twic, Mayengumel IDP Camp)
- Western Bahr el-Ghazal (Wau PoC AA, Roc Dong IDP camp, Jur River County and Masna Collective Center)
- Western Equatoria (Yambio Town and Rimenze)
- Abyei Administrative Area

Using the consultation guide from the Secretariat of the UN Secretary General's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement, UNHCR, IOM, CARE International, DRC, Plan International and NCA - ACT Alliance together with their partners conducted 390 Focus Group Discussion (FDGs). To complement the information obtained through FGDs, some agencies and partners conducted additional key informant interviews (KII), in particular regarding any additional

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[6] Participating agencies initially planned to include in the consultation process the Greater Pibor Administrative Area. However, due to security situation stemming from recent sub-national violence, the fieldwork was not feasible.

information community key informants would like to convey to the Panel members. In total, a total of 73 KII were conducted within the data collection period.

Overview of field activities

Participating agencies and organizations have conducted in total **390 focus group discussions with 3,026** IDPs and host community members and additional **73 key informant interviews**. Consultations were conducted at displacement sites (protection of civilian's sites and collective sites) and urban areas across more than 35 locations in eight states and Abyei Administrative Area. Each FGD had between 6 to 12 people on average, depending on the availability of the space allocated for the exercise (smaller groups in closed premises and larger in open space) to ensure social distancing in adherence with COVID-19 preventive measures.

Agency	#Focus Group Discussions	# Participants	# Key informant interviews
UNHCR	259	1,697	40
IOM	54	576	N/A
CARE International	19	98	12
NCA - Act Alliance	15	320	0
Plan International	22	129	18
Danish Refugee Council (DRC)	21[7]	206	3
Total	**390**	**3,026**	**73**

Mobilization and Selection of Participants from the Affected Communities

During the consultations, agencies utilized the existing community structures, which include: women, persons with disabilities and youth committees and camp leadership structures for community mobilization to secure quorum for the consultative process. Additionally, fieldwork was coordinated with relevant Government representatives, in particular the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) and community leaders. The latter, who are also engaged in the locally established COVID-19 task force were among those consulted as key informants, in particular regarding additional inputs that might not have been directly captured through the questionnaire and for any relevant updates regarding the COVID-19 situation in the area.

Participant selection was guided by diversity considerations among the community. Information was collected from host community (including responses from returnees as part of host communities) and displaced populations and further desegregated based on considerations such as age, gender and diversity. As a result, affected women, girls, men, children, older people, youth, including persons with specific needs, minority groups and existing community leadership structures were all consulted.

Due to the COVID – 19 pandemic and in line with Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) measures number of FGD participants was aligned according to the space availability. At the same time, some KII were conducted remotely, especially in Juba where confirmed COVID-19 cases remain high in comparison to other parts of the country. During

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[7] These include FGDs conducted in Koch jointly with CARE International.

FGDs, participants and facilitators were provided with masks and ensured the availability of handwashing stations and hand sanitizers and maintained the recommended social distancing even as FGDs were administered.

Challenges Faced

- The COVID-19 pandemic and associated travel restrictions impacted access to the respondents leading to remote KIIs being required in some areas. Agencies adopted the COVID-19 prevention measures such as the use of masks, social distancing, hand sanitizer, reduced the number of participants in consultation groups and relying on phone calls to conduct remote KII.
- Some areas in South Sudan have limited humanitarian access, such as some counties in Upper Nile, Warrap, Central Equatoria and Unity State as a result of insecurity and flooding, thus limiting the coverage of the consultations.
- Additionally, some of the respondents, although willing to participate in the consultative process, were not sure of their future plans given the ongoing insecurity in some parts of the country and limited survival options in areas of returns, making advocacy and planning for their return difficult for the humanitarian actors.
- Despite informing the community that there would be no immediate services/assistance provided as a result of the consultative process, the communities made immediate requests for shoes, clothes, other non-food items (NFIs), food and and cash assistance.

Key Highlights: IDPs and host community consultations

Theme 1: Durable Solutions

KIIs and FGDs conducted at the IDP Collective sites, protection of civilian (PoC) sites and urban areas indicate that **IDPs are very much concerned about the overall security situation in the country** and are not satisfied with the implementation of the peace process. **According to them, the situation continues to remain unpredictable and they urged the Government to expedite the process of national reconciliation and disarmament to pave the way for durable solutions for IDPs** in the country. Reportedly, a considerable number of youth in South Sudan (SSD) possess guns, and communities believe it is the responsibility of, and crucial for, the Government to conduct disarmament and ensure peace and security. Most of the communities have developed hostilities over the years due to conflict, revenge killings, intercommunal violence and human right abuses and reported that reconciliation is required.

The majority of the IDPs interviewed showed interest to return to their area of origin/habitual residencies and rebuild their lives provided sustainable peace had been achieved in the areas of return. They are hopeful that their quality of life would improve as a result of them returning home if the conditions are permissible for return. They, however, requested more assistance from Government, UN and NGOs to support their return and reintegration process. The remaining IDPs wished to be integrated into the host communities. Most participants in the consultations hoped their lives would have improved in 5 years and that the peace agreement would have been implemented. However, the vast majority said that any improvement was subject to the overall reduction in communal clashes and sub-national violence that is still occurring across the country.

IDPs pointed out that the **lack of basic services** including shelter, health, education, WASH and livelihood opportunities in their areas of origin are affecting the IDPs decision to return as those services are at least available at a certain level in the displacement sites. Some IDPs expressed that the services which they are receiving from the humanitarian organizations in the collective sites are not available in their hometowns. Of all the needs, availability of food, shelter, security and better education opportunities for children were highlighted as key considerations for IDPs remaining in their communities of displacement across the Country.

The IDPs reported strained relationships with the host communities if their stay in the collective sites prolongs and emphasized the need for **supporting peaceful co-existence activities** to maintain positive relations with the host communities. They called for more resources and basic services to aid integration and avert tensions given that the increased population resulting from IDP displacement and returnees places a strain on host community resources. Both IDPs and host community youths noted the need for facilitated interaction among them including in schools and during sports activities to support positive relations which will be beneficial in protracted IDP situations across various locations. **IDPs suggested inclusion of the most vulnerable members of host communities in food and NFIs assistance to ease tensions over distribution of humanitarian assistance. In some locations, host communities reported they had not received any assistance from humanitarians.** They indicated

that they are more inclined to assist IDPs despite scarce resources as most of them were IDPs at some point.

While responding to the question on **impacts of hosting IDPs**, the **host community spoke about the shortage of land for cultivation, poor sanitation due to lack of adequate WASH facilities for IDPs, limited water points and health care facilities as the two communities share the limited resources.** There was apprehension that if IDPs did not return to their areas of origin, the future would be mired with many challenges. They urged the Government and Humanitarian actors to provide enough basic services that can be shared by both communities.

IDPs coming from flood affected areas requested the Government to allocate land to IDPs who cannot return to their villages. **Land occupation and unsolved housing, land and property (HLP) issues** are huge impediments for returns, and most of the respondents requested the Government, UN and NGOs to find solutions to support land and property restitution.

On the issue of **returns**, one youth leader highlighted slow action on the part of humanitarian actors to support requests for returns. Some IDPs noted poor road conditions and transport challenges especially during the rainy season as factors deterring provision of assistance to those willing to return. Host communities pointed out challenges in accessing their land for cultivation, in particular around the areas that experienced violence recently.

Theme 2: Prevention

Peace and security were the recurring themes repeatedly highlighted under prevention. IDPs noted that Rule of Law and a stable political system would prevent future displacement as it would ensure security. **Concerns were raised that the Government had not taken adequate steps to avert and address security concerns.** Participants urged the **Government to expedite service delivery, embrace national solidarity and diversity.** IDPs also noted that some of the groups are not adequately represented in the decision-making structures which limits their opportunities to articulate their concerns.

Host communities noted Government has the power to exacerbate or avert conflicts. Lack of development and proliferation of arms were mentioned as factors responsible for ongoing violence including rampant cattle raids, revenge killings and subsequent widespread displacement. Proposals were made, by both IDP and host communities, for the Government to:

- Conduct disarmament of the civilian population
- Respect human rights and conduct investigations
- Incarcerate perpetrators of human rights abuses and actions that result in displacement
- Provide food
- Create employment opportunities,
- Attract development assistance
- Ensure representation of different groups in the decision-making process

- Ensure security and the instalment of law enforcement personnel e.g police in various locations
- Ensure cantonment of armed forces to curtail their movement.
- Improve the quality of training provided to the police
- Improve the economic situation

The IDPs and host communities called for provision of basic services such as shelter, education, health, WASH services, support in agriculture and other formal and informal sectors to sustain livelihood opportunities in the IDPs producing and hosting areas. This will ensure harmonious co-existence of various communities and avert displacement. Some **IDPs also suggested the construction of water reservoirs in the flood prone areas to store the flood water for agriculture farming and avoid flooding of properties and farms which is causing periodic displacements in certain parts of the country**. Both host communities and IDPs have acknowledged the need for **long term investments that could improve living standards and access to services across the country** as one of the requirements for long term stability and mitigation measure against further displacement.

To prevent further displacement, youth and women expressed that the Government should address tribal conflicts, corruption and general insecurity to protect the civilian population and their properties. The Government was urged to organize **peacebuilding conferences and forums** for people to resolve misunderstandings among the communities and improve law and order. The youth groups suggested that both IDP and host communities should be provided training on conflict resolution.

Theme 3: Participation and accountability

IDPs and host communities noted that **availability and accessibility of feedback mechanisms vary between different population categories.** Whilst IDPs living within the PoC and collective sites have access to mechanisms set up by operating agencies, those living within host communities and host communities themselves have limited opportunities for this as in many instances there is no permanent presence of humanitarian organizations on the ground. Overall, all groups expressed they had **limited forums for expressing their voice and felt powerless,** particularly with regards to the sharing their concerns with Government[8]. The main channel of conveying grievances to the authorities is reportedly through humanitarian organizations. Participants noted that **Government accountability could only be attained through humanitarians, community-based groups and religious institutions.**
They were aware of both formal and informal mechanisms and structures through which they could express concerns to government authorities and NGOs including regular communication with local chiefs and inclusive meetings. Nevertheless, those living outside of displacement sites, reported very limited instances where the feedback was provided, in particular communication from the Government regarding the implementation of the peace process was lacking. In general, IDPs also relied on the protection desks in POCs and collective sites. **Host and returnee communities urged the Government to give them the opportunity to express their views freely without intimidation and respond where necessary.**

IDPs reported they could not hold the government directly accountable as this would put them at risk. For instance, in Upper Nile IDPs noted that before the conflict communities raised their complaints with the local chief for elevation to the county commissioner, but currently chiefs fear elevating complaints to commissioners as they will be accused of opposing the government. There were no clear channels in place on how complaints to

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[8] One of the host community members in Hai Vetnary said "*we're feeling as if we are not citizens of our own country as no information is shared with us*" (Hai Vetnary, Juba, FGD with host community, September 2020, IOM).

Government should be raised and in some instances IDPs and host community indicated were completely unable to hold Government to account. They further called for equal representation inclusive of all gender groups, people with disabilities, age and ethnicity in all public institutions. IDPs and host community reported that women's issues should be reflected in legal frameworks. **A large section of participants stated that only UN and NGOs hear their voices and provide assistance** making them the only accountable actors. Some participants expressed dissatisfaction with community structures, local chiefs and structures created to hold Governments or institutions to account or give feedback.

The elderly group of IDP informed that they are able to communicate their complaints through meetings with the RRC which acts as a liaison between the government and humanitarian organizations. It was noted that **cultural norms do not encourage the inclusion of women, youth and children in decision making**. **Calls were made for participation to be inclusive of minority communities and PLwDs.** Children and youth noted their voices were not heard and requested for linkages to (inter) national youth groups. Humanitarian partners were requested to organize more regular workshops, conferences, and seminars for IDPs, host communities and RRC at the camp level. A suggestion was made for the establishment of a community radio stations to raise voices. Radios were mentioned on multiple occasions as good sources for information sharing, awareness-raising and expressing concerns. However, some of the IDPs and host communities also noted that there is no real **freedom of expression** for all groups. Respondents have also noted that they use letters and peaceful protests/rallies as ways to make authorities and humanitarians hear their voices.

Theme 4: Protection

Participants reported that they were traumatized by cycles of intercommunal/sub-national violence and this impacted negatively on their physical and emotional wellbeing. Some felt safe in their current locations, while others noted that recurring cycles of violence were still a concern. Participants in Leer County noted that **political lines and tribal affiliations are the contributing factors to the division between the IDPs and the host communities in some locations**, and were also impacting negatively on freedom of movement. IDPs opined the Government was not making effort to improve their safety. Some host community members reported feeling safe in their areas of origin/habitual residencies.

Consulted IDPs and host communities predominantly responded that **they feel safe in areas where they stay during the daytime**, whereas insecurities rise in the evening, limiting their freedom of movement. IDPs residing within PoC sites raised concerns about porous perimeter fences which allow outsiders to come into the site, causing security concerns among the residents.

IDP **women felt unsafe due to congestion in the camps, given it leads to a lack of privacy which contributes to increased risk, and actual occurrence of, sexual violence.** They reported living in fear, being scared for both themselves and their children. **UNMISS was recognized as a key actor providing protection** from insecurity to communities, at least for those within the protected IDPs sites and host communities residing in the proximity of UN patrols/bases. The presence of criminal gangs curtails movement at night as gangs often sexually harass and assault women and girls. **Gender Based Violence (GBV) risks were reported to affect women regardless of their displacement status**; the youth specifically feared abductions and early marriage. In Eastern Equatoria **women**

and girls reported feeling depressed as a result of rape and sexual abuse; requiring counselling and psychosocial support which is not adequately available. Elderly and persons living with disability reportedly face challenges in accessing services outside IDPs site. Other protection concerns raised included unsafe shelters without doors, snake bites and general insecurity in the sites exacerbated by lack of patrolling by police, fear of cattle raids and revenge attacks in areas such as Unity State.

Some IDPs in Upper Nile and Maiwut were satisfied with the level of freedom of movement accorded to them. In Maiwut – Upper Nile, movement of IDPs and host community was free within Maiwut but areas outside remained insecure. Restrictions were present on the border point with Ethiopia where they buy their food.

Theme 5: Coordination

Perceptions on coordination received mixed reactions. IDP groups in Leer and in displacement sites across the country informed that communication and coordination with the humanitarian organizations is done through information desks, camp leadership, partners meetings, through women and girls' friendly space (WGFS) and through community structures as well as coordination between partners and RRC/Relief Organization for South Sudan (ROSS). Varying opinions were expressed by the IDPs on the coordination and communication mechanisms with the humanitarian organizations. While the IDPS appreciated the communication and coordination approaches of the protection organizations, they pointed out shortcomings in dealing with WASH and health services/actors.

IDPs living within collective centers and PoC sites expressed **satisfaction with the coordination between them and humanitarian agencies operating on the sites**. **Community leaders and church leaders are** recognized as key actors for coordination with the community and for transmitting messages to the **RRC** representatives in the area. Consulted communities, however, suggested that **IDPs should be represented in all important forums** to ensure their needs are adequately articulated and to receive feedback. Women and girls expressed that meetings are not organized on a regular basis with them to discuss their concerns and that they have not received adequate dignity kits, hand washing soaps and hand sanitizers.

Some participants were dissatisfied with how organizations coordinate their activities although they expressed satisfaction with the communication and the diversity of services offered. In some locations in Yambio and Juba urban areas, some participants noted they have not received any assistance from NGOs.

Theme 6: Humanitarian-Development-Peacebuilding Nexus

Preference for development assistance over emergency assistance varies across the country. Some IDPs and host communities **predominantly preferred emergency assistance** to meet their basic needs and advocated for shelter, NFI, health, food and water supply as their immediate needs. Prevalence of different types of insecurities across the country and within assessed locations has made respondents cautious of long-term planning for the future. Although they acknowledged the need for moving towards reconciliation phase, they are still not convinced about the sustainability of the current revitalized peace agreement and have raised concerns that much more has to be done (including joint forces, disarmament, ending intercommunal clashes and sub-national violence) for them to

feel safe in their country. Some advocated for **elections** to give a chance to different groups (including minorities) to engage in the governance structures.

Different groups emphasized the need for **more vocational training** (including sewing, bread making, tailoring, carpentry) especially for displaced women and youth who are reportedly often idle and jobless. Most of the respondents mentioned that the UN and the Government should scale up different peacebuilding initiatives to **promote reconciliation and conflict management** between the communities.

A faction of IDPs favored long term developmental assistance due to its positive impact on the quality of life, particularly in Upper Nile and Unity State. The current emergency and development assistance were considered to be insufficient. In some areas host community noted they have never benefited from emergency assistance but did benefit from development assistance. Requests were made for more resources and humanitarian assistance to be availed to the host community and IDPs to ensure that peace prevailed in their community and in long-term, to make population more independent and less reliant on humanitarian aid. In Leer, the host community noted that in 2019 they received dignity kits in addition to the construction of a women's business center, support to traditional courts, vegetable seeds and rehabilitation of roads. They highlighted a need for increased distribution of NFIs to the host community.

In Torit, Rubkona, Koch, Eastern Equatoria, Juba, Wau and other locations, **respondents noted that there was no balance between emergency assistance and long-term assistance as most humanitarian projects are short term, responding to emergencies** and therefore focused on distribution of soap, food, seed and cash for work. Government and other partners were urged to focus on developmental projects, including vocational training for youth and women, livelihood skills and building more health facilities. Respondents highlighted a need to actively involve community leaders such as chiefs, the elderly and religious leaders in peacebuilding activities.

Theme 7: Specific needs and capacities

Participants noted displacement affected children, women, PLwD and elderly people both from IDP and host communities differently. Some calls were made for PLwDs to receive more assistance. The range of services provided to people with specific needs was considered satisfactory although requests for more food was prevalent. Participants noted that **although women and children were particularly affected by displacement there is no adequate support from humanitarians to respond to their needs.** Women have suffered extensively during the years of conflict and displacement, with some losing their husbands and becoming single heads of households. They are also exposed to different types of harassment, adding to their vulnerability and trauma. **Persons living with disabilities are often left behind or have lost caretakers when fleeing their homes.** Children have lost years of education and are also exposed to various maltreatments, including abductions and child labor. Issue of orphaned children was raised in particularly among the respondents in Abyei Administrative Area who advocated for construction of special shelters and tailored assistance that would grant them access to education and other services. To address these vulnerabilities, participants proposed the following:

- Psychosocial counselling and support them with dealing with traumatic events in the past.
- Training for women to support them find employment and cope with impacts of displacement

- **Persons living with disabilities should be granted extra cash and assistance to meet their basic needs including mobility equipment.**
- The Government and UN should increase access to education by opening adequate schools and support with school fees and other educational needs. Agencies should facilitate foster care and family reunification for unaccompanied and separated children.
- **Many respondents emphasized the need for vocational training and job opportunities**
- Humanitarians should address most pressing needs: shelter, food, NFI, health and education.
- Action to challenge harmful cultural practices that negatively affect society particularly women should be taken.

Theme 8: COVID-19

Overall, consulted communities are **aware of the COVID-19 pandemic. They received information through different channels**: radio talk shows, boda boda talks, awareness-raising campaigns and posters. Some mentioned that most of the information is shared in English and Arabic and requested information to be shared in other local languages. Despite the awareness, communities are **not adequately adhering to preventive measures due to challenges in accessing WASH supplies (water, soap) and lack of protective equipment (face masks),** whereas some believe Covid – 19 does not pose serious threat to their health. Respondents asked for support from the Government and humanitarian agencies in providing necessary supplies. Though the needs between IDPs and host communities are similar, IDPs are reportedly further exposed due to congested sites, overcrowded shelters and lack of access to protective gear.

There was acknowledgment that the disease had affected social life and impacted on livelihood opportunities. **Some IDPs also lost their jobs and livelihoods due to the COVID-19;** in particular due to: movement restrictions imposed by the Government, UNMISS reduced patrols within POC sites as part of Covid 19 IPC measures and the footprint reduction policy and businesses were closed due to interruptions in supply chains particularly affecting border areas. Participants in Yei Town, have specifically emphasized the closure of schools as a major concern for the youth, in particular young girls who may be therefore forced into early marriage.

Respondents made the following suggestions.
- **Government and humanitarian partners to increase distribution of basic needs items.**
- The Government to ensure peace, stability and economic recovery through implementation of the peace agreement.
- Establish isolation facilities, improve health services and provide adequate shelter.

Theme 9: Any other issues

IDPs and host communities also highlighted the below mentioned issues/concerns and expectations from Government

- Disarmament of the civilian to reduce the rate of killing/between within the communities.
- Improved security and safety for women and girls.
- Strengthen education services including building adequate schools, pay teachers' salaries and increase the number of teachers and scholarships.
- Construct adequate hospitals, boreholes and permanent shelter for the elderly.
- Establish and invest in adult schools.
- Ensure availability of adequate medicines in hospitals especially for ulcers and high blood pressure.
- Reduce risks associated with exposure to COVID – 19 in border areas.
- Distribute PPE and masks for COVID-19 protection.
- Distribute clothes and sandals
- Provide psychosocial and trauma services

- Progress towards the implementation of the Peace Agreement should be clearly communicated to communities
- Finalize the training of joint forces and start with deployments.
- Ensure a peaceful and comprehensive disarmament process
- Invest in basic infrastructure (transportation and health services in particular)
- Solve housing, land and property issues across the country, and allocate land for IDPs who cannot return to areas of origin/habitual residencies.
- Improve infrastructure, in particular, dykes around the White Nile to prevent flooding
- Scale-up disaster risk reduction and preparedness programs across affected counties.

Conclusion

- Consultations of various population categories across South Sudan has revealed that the level of humanitarian and development assistance is not proportionate to the needs of IDPs, Host Communities and Returnees.
- Most IDPs would prefer to return to their area of origin/habitual residencies should security and availability of basic needs improve.
- Gaps in assistance were particularly noted in food, shelter, livelihood activities and basic infrastructure (health, education, WASH services and roads network) and response to COVID-19.
- These needs were articulated by various population categories irrespective of their age, gender and diversity.

Recommendations to the IDP High Level Panel

Strengthen joint advocacy and monitoring from the UN Secretary-General High Level Panel on IDPs, the international community and the Government to:

- Ensure accountability towards government commitments, including the implementation of the peace agreement, and towards IDPs rights including addressing atrocities. This should include establishing feedback channels between displaced population, host communities and the Government.

- Strengthen action to facilitate peacebuilding including peace dialogues and peace education inclusive of displaced population

- High level advocacy for adoption of relevant policies and legislation, particularly the "Protection and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons Bill 2018" (also referred to as the IDP Bill) for South Sudan. Specific legislation for IDPs will help to domesticate international standards for IDPs and ensure that IDPs challenges,

needs and vulnerabilities captured through the consultation process are articulated and addressed; Rebuild IDPs and international community trust and confidence on government action and enhance humanitarian response; Provide a solid base for anchoring response planning, prioritization and appropriate allocation of resources. The Bill is pending at the Ministry of Justice for review as of February 2019. Encourage the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management (MHADM) to follow up with the Ministry of Justice to finalize the review and send the Bill to the Parliament.

- High-level advocacy for the endorsement and passage of the 2019 Draft National Land Policy. This piece of legislation provides nuanced and forward-thinking legal guidance for IDPs and other vulnerable people. In particular, it addresses: the provision of housing and shelter for landless IDPs; the right to make legally legitimated claims to land and property through alternative means of verification; the rights and responsibilities of communities to manage and allocate their own land; and the specific rights of women and children in inheriting, owning, transferring and/ or utilizing land and property.

- Facilitate triple nexus between peace, humanitarian and development action through high level panel engagement with relevant actors for necessary action. This includes advocacy for long term investment directed towards transition, recovery and development programs to allow systematic and comprehensive interventions particularly in areas of return that would strengthen the resilience of communities.

- Advocate for mainstreamed implementation of the Comprehensive Migration Policy of the Republic of South Sudan, in particular towards addressing challenges related to forced migration such as lack of protection for vulnerable population groups, economic opportunities for refugees and IDPs, solving land disputes and improving social cohesion between host communities and forced migrants disturbed by protracted conflict over resources. The Comprehensive Migration Policy provides the Government of South Sudan and its partners with a guidance on how to address various migration challenges arising from insecurity, disasters, poverty and lack of basic services. In addition to addressing forced migrations, the Policy encompasses additional three strategic areas: free movement of people and border management, ensuring regular pathways to safe, human and orderly labour migration, and promotion of migration and development.

- Advocate for streamlined and strengthened data collection and data management capacity, in compliance to Protection Information Management and Data Protection principles, both for Government, humanitarians and other relevant stakeholders (including donors, development actors) to enhance evidence-based interventions and response, including scaling up the capacity of the National Bureau of Statistics, the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management and Refugee and Rehabilitation Commission as custodians displacement data.