

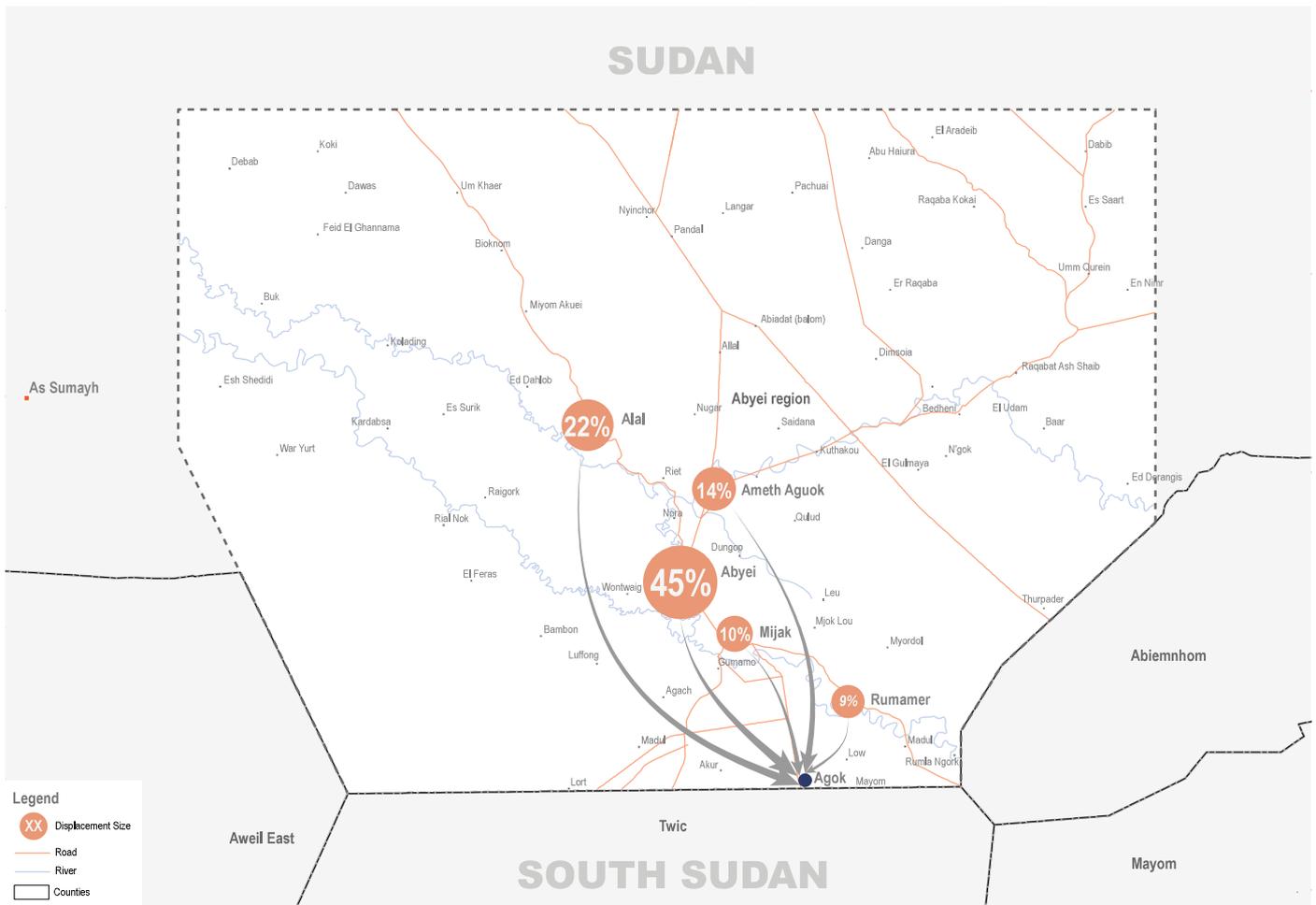
Highlights

44% of the displaced households were uprooted from Abyei Town in 2011

78% intend to return to their place of the origin or their former habitual residence. Major motives are the challenging living conditions in the place of displacement combined with perceived safety and security in the place of origin / former habitual residence.

51% indicate the intention to return within the next 6 months, whereas 21% indicate to leave in more than 6 months, and 28% in more than one year

Abyei Administrative Area



BACKGROUND

The Abyei Area is divided by two dominant, culturally distinct groups; the agro-pastoralist Dinka Ngok and the pastoral Misseriya. Conflict between the two is embedded in livelihood patterns that require migrations through Dinka Ngok territory by the Misseriya in search of pasture and water for livestock. Tensions have been exacerbated by international politics that have made Abyei a contested area following the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005 that eventually led to South Sudan's independence in 2011. Failure to settle the status of the Abyei region led to serious fighting from 2007 to 2008, resulting in the displacement of up to 25,000 people. In 2011, violence erupted in Abyei town and the nearby villages causing the displacement of as many as 110,000 individuals Dinka Ngok, destroying residences and public infrastructure.

Most of those who were displaced to the southern parts of Abyei and Warrap and Northern Bahr el Ghazal still have not returned to Abyei due to fears of renewed violence. Agok, which is situated in the southern tip of Abyei, is the biggest town hosting displaced communities from Abyei town and the nearby villages. Based on IOM's population estimation to Agok town there are a total of 30,000 inhabitants out of which approximately 23,000 are IDPs from Abyei town and the nearby villages. This report essentially aims to highlight the intention of displaced communities settled in Agok town.



METHODOLOGY

IOM collected quantitative and qualitative data from households, focus groups and key informants. The survey targeted a total of 2,765 estimated number of displaced households residing in Agok town. A sample size of 551 was selected through a Random Sampling methodology. The sample considered a confidence interval of 99 per cent and an error margin of 5%. In an attempt to triangulate the information, IOM furthermore collected data from five focus groups evenly spread within Agok Town, each group consisting of 10 to 15 members. IOM also gathered information from key informants who are local authorities of Rumamer County based in Agok.

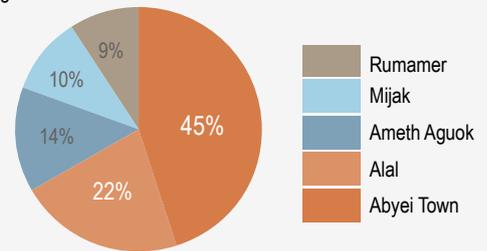
OVERALL FINDINGS

1. General Demographics

The survey targeted a sample of 551 displaced households in Abyei consisting of 4,914 individuals. Based on focus group discussions, most of the households were displaced during the violence of 2011. 45 per cent of the surveyed population are displaced from Abyei Town, followed by Alal and Ameth Aguok Counties at 22 per cent and 14 per cent respectively. Some of the key locations of displacement include Awolnum, Mading Achueng and Maker in Alal County; Mijak, Leu and Tajalie in Mijak County; Mabok, Marial Achak and Rumamer in Rumamer County; and Miyen Koor, Dungop and Todaj in Ameth Aguok County.

Graph 1.1

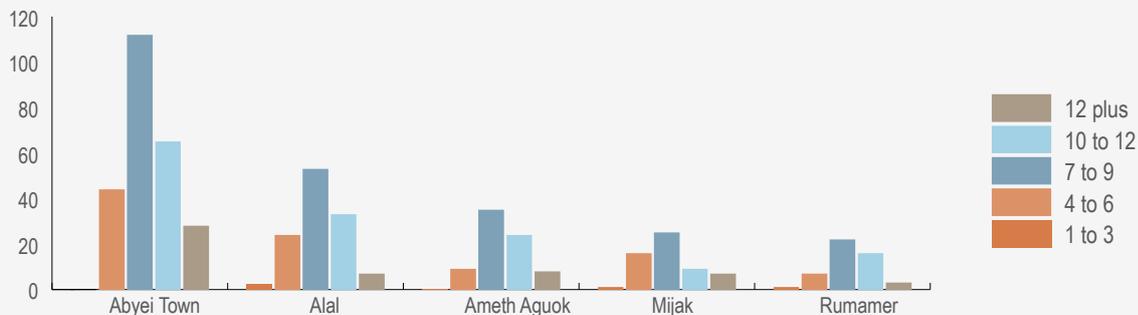
Proportion of sampled households by county of displacement during the conflict of 2011.



Most of the sampled households consist of 7 to 9 individuals. Based on information collected through Focus Group Discussions (FDGs), sometimes different families live together in a household, in a single compound.

Graph 1.2

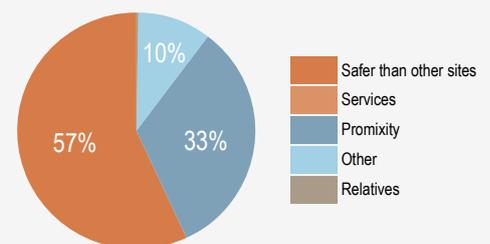
Proportion of sampled households by household size



During the conflict in 2011, a major reason for displacement to Agok for almost the majority of IDPs was safety at 57 per cent followed by availability of basic humanitarian services at 33 per cent. This was similar to the motives of displaced communities in Abathok, where safety was the main motive at 49 per cent.

Graph 1.3

Reason of displaced households for selecting Agok during the conflict in 2011.

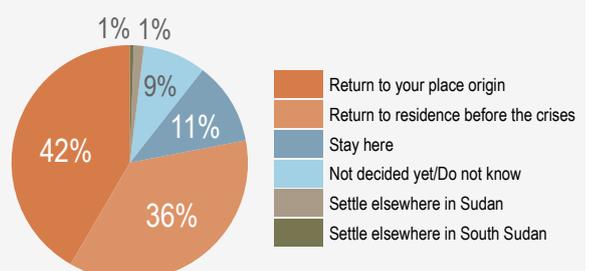


2. Intention

The intention of most of the surveyed households (78%) is to return to their place of origin or their pre-displacement habitual place of residence. Less than 10 per cent have not decided or do not know yet when they will return, while 11 per cent have decided to stay within the host community. Only 2 per cent indicate their intention to settle elsewhere in Sudan or South Sudan.

Graph 2.1

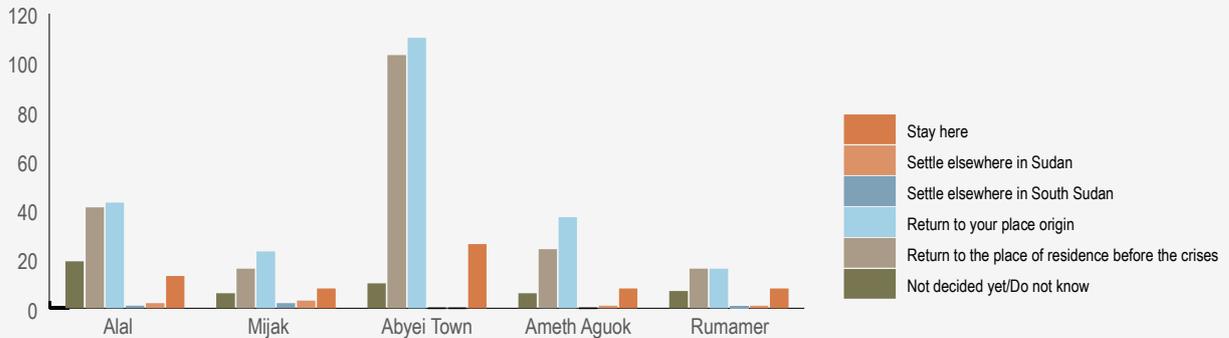
Intention of displaced households residing in Agok.



The number of households who intend to either return or settle elsewhere is significantly higher in Agok, compared to Abathok, where an intention survey conducted in April 2017 in the town of Abathok demonstrated that 48 per cent of IDPs intended to return or settle elsewhere. This could partly be due to the higher population density in Agok, which has limited the access to land for the displaced communities. The motives that influence the decisions of the displaced community to return or remain are explored further under section 2.1 and 2.2.

Graph 2.2

Intention of displaced households by county

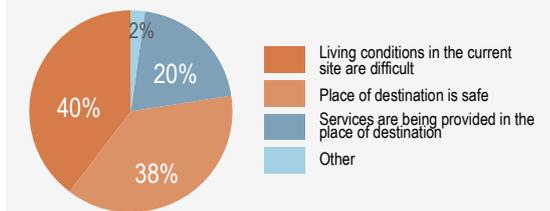


2.1. Intention to Return or Settle Elsewhere

A combination of push and pull factors continues to influence the decisions of displaced households in Agok to return or settle elsewhere. A major push factor is the challenging living conditions in the place of displacement, which is playing into households' decisions to return for 40 per cent of respondents. Based on the feedback from the community through FGDs, the dire economic conditions, exacerbated by limited access to food, land for grazing and farming and unemployment are making living in Agok difficult. However, it is important to note that nearly the same number of respondents (38%) indicate that the perception of safety in the area of origin is their main reason for considering to return.

Graph 2.1.1

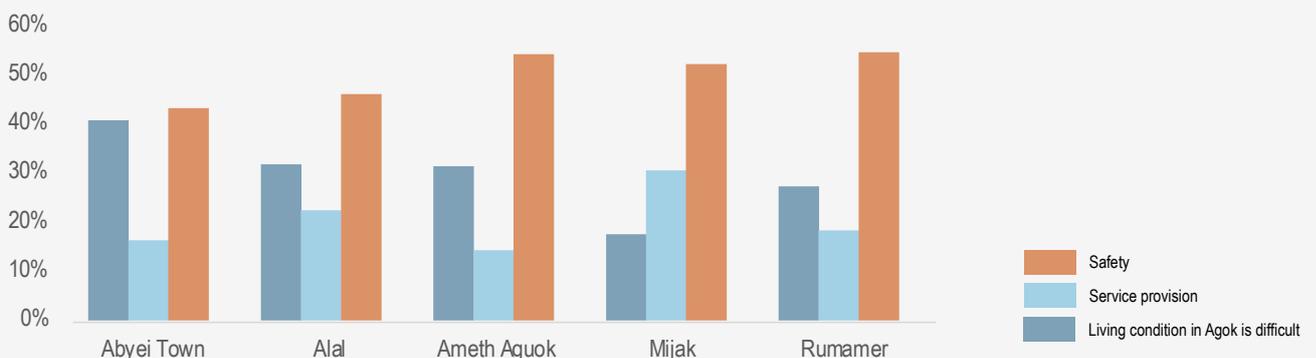
Main reasons for deciding to return or settle elsewhere



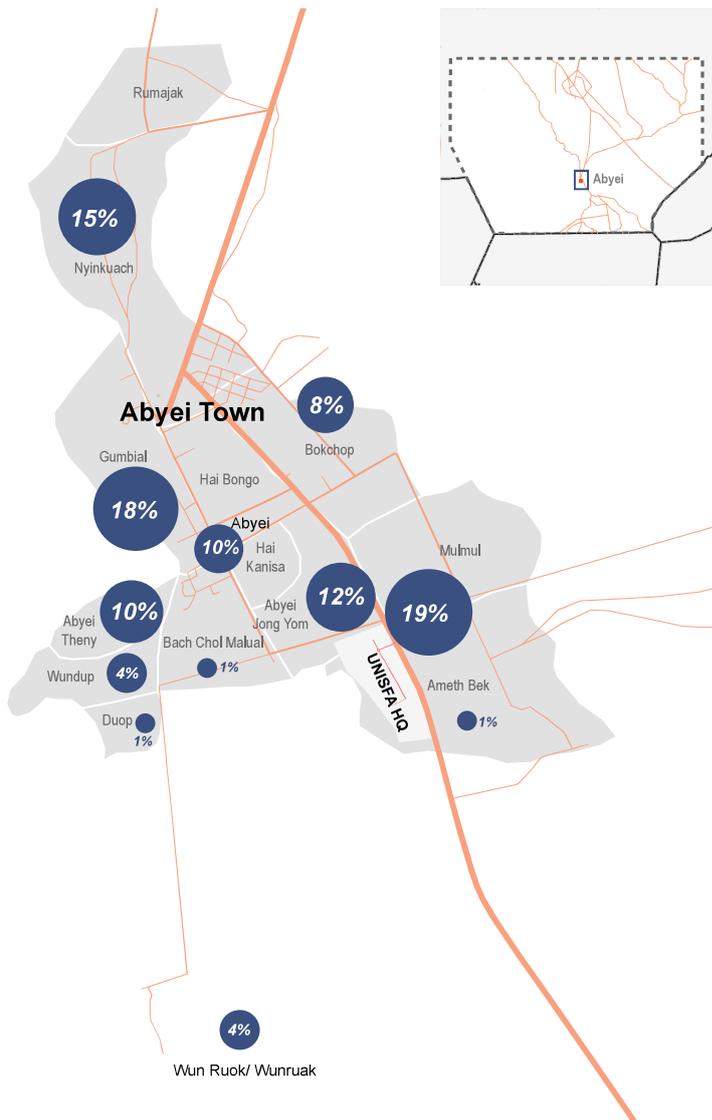
Furthermore, the improvement of services in places of return, especially in Abyei Town and bomas of Mijak, Leu and Mabok serve as significant pull factors. As indicated above in Graph 2.1.1, the provision of relatively improved basic services has been the second strongest pull factor next to security. However, the provision of services within the Abyei Area is not consistent, partly due to the population density and settlement patterns, which have been affected by the conflict and mistrust between communities.

Graph 2.1.2

Reason to return to habitual county of residence



Households intended to return from Agok to their area of origin



Households from Alal County and Ameth Aguok are the second and third most prominent among those indicating that perception of security in the area of return is their main decision-making factor, at 18 per cent and 14 per cent respectively.

Abyei Town being one of the most populated towns within the Abyei area, enjoys relatively better services, provided by the local administration as well as humanitarian actors. More than 80 per cent of households who intend to return to Abyei Town do so mainly due to the perceived safety in Abyei Town (41%) and dire living condition in Agok (43%), whilst 16 per cent indicate to do so primarily due to availability of basic services. Some of the neighborhoods in Abyei Town deemed safe by households who intend to return to their place of habitual residence include, Bach Chol Malual, Bokchop, Duop and Gumbial. Among households intending to return to Alal County, 31 per cent is due to the perceived security in Alal, particularly in villages of Galar, Kolom, Noon and Mading Acheug.

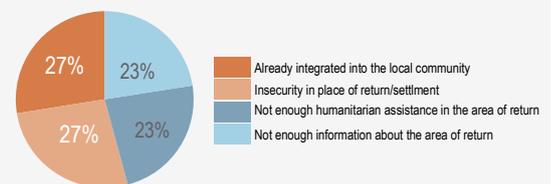
Perceived safety and security is less of a pull factor for families returning to Mijak and Rumamer Counties, with only 20 per cent and 30 per cent respectively indicating that their intention to return is tied to perceptions of safety and security. The challenging living conditions in Agok is the major push factor for households to return to their habitual residence in Mijak and Rumamer. Some of the key villages of intended return include, Leu Mijak in Mijak County and Mabok.

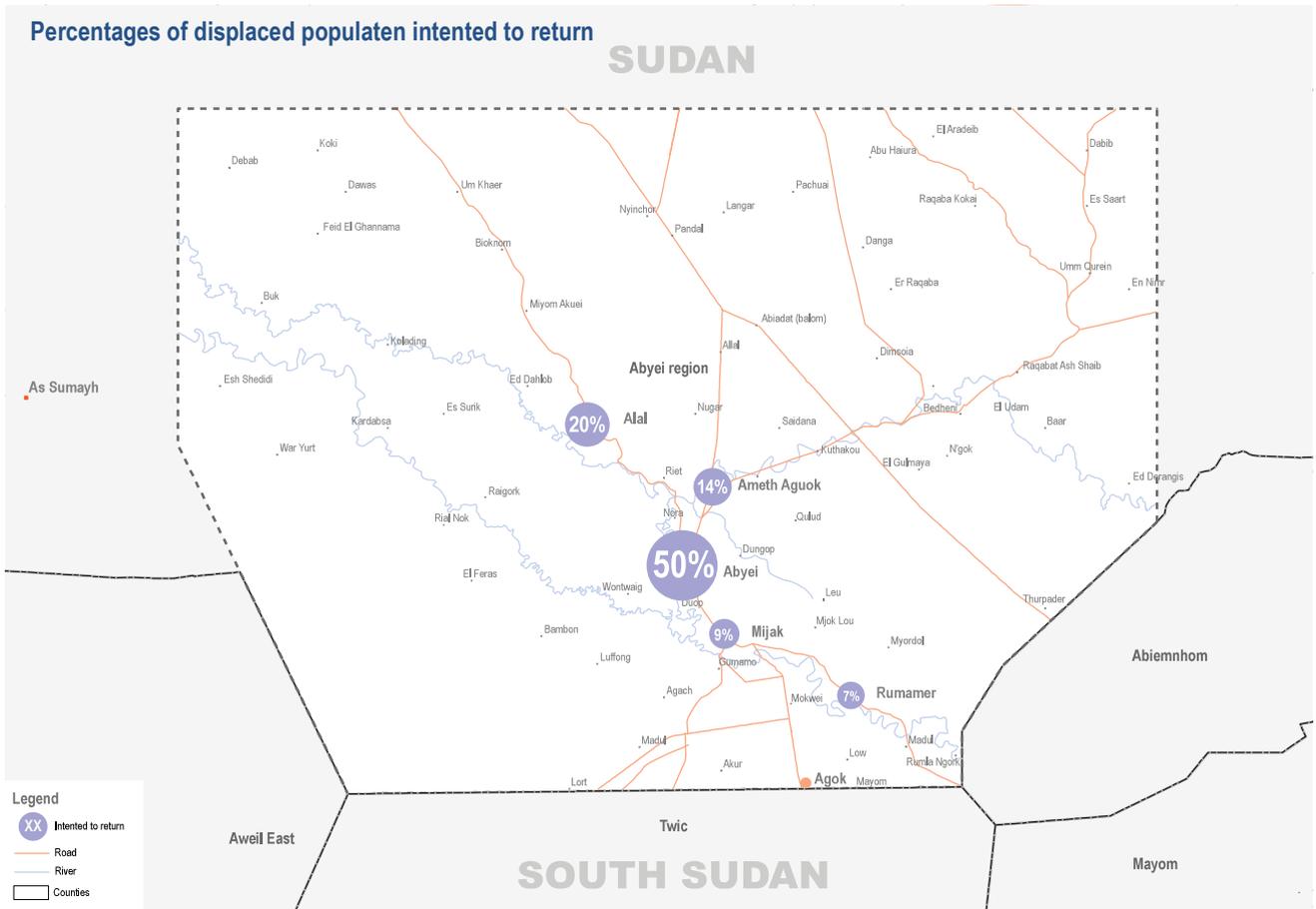
2.2. Intention to Stay or Indecision

Graph 2.1 depicts that 11 per cent of the sampled population expressed intention to stay, while another 9 per cent do not know or have not decided yet. There are four main reasons why 20 per cent of the sample size intends to stay or remains indecisive. These reasons are 1) inadequate humanitarian assistance and basic services in the place of return, 2) perceived insecurity in the place of return 3) limited information about the area of return and 4) fact that families are already integrated into the hosting community

Graph 2.2.1

Intention of displaced households residing in Agok.

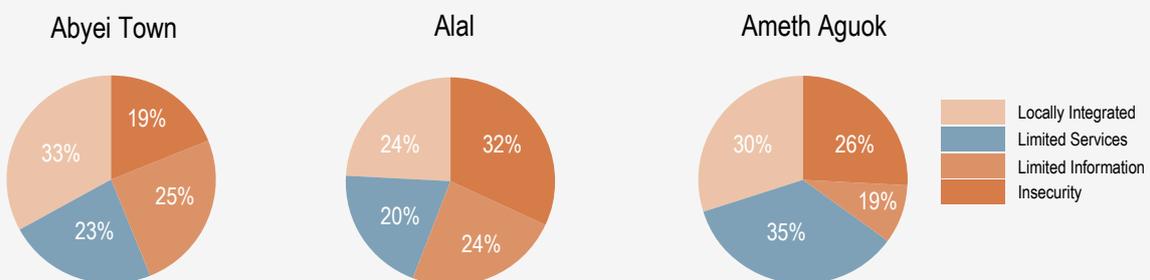




These factors have direct correlation with areas where the displaced come from. For example, decision of households who were displaced from Ameth Aguok are motivated to stay mainly by the limited services (35%) and less motivated by lack of adequate information (9%). In comparison, it is perceived that for households displaced from Alal insecurity is the major factor influencing the decision at 32 per cent to stay or uncertainty about whether to return.

Graph 2.2.2

Proportion of households whose decision to stay in Agok is influenced by information, services and insecurity, disaggregated by the county of displacement



Among households who have not decided yet, 32 per cent are indecisive due to lack of adequate information and another 32 per cent due to perceived insecurity in the place of return. In comparison, among households who want to stay, 40 per cent intend to stay due to the fact that they have already settled within the host community in Agok.

More than the majority of respondents (83%), who were displaced from Alal County (e.g. Awolnum, Maker, Mading Achueng) have not decided what to do due to the lack of information about the places of return in the county.

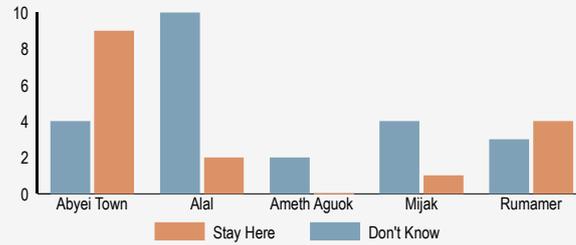
The same applies for indecisiveness of households from Alal, due to perceived insecurity. Close to 70 per cent of households interviewed indicate that their indecision to return is related to insecurity in locations within Alal County.

Limited services in areas of return are another factor influencing decision-making. Fifty-three per cent of households who are undecided whether to return or not, due to limited services, are from Alal and Ameth Aguok.

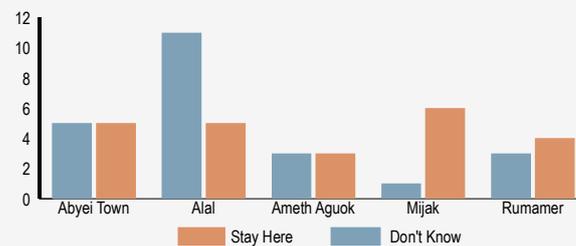
Graph 2.2.3

Proportion of household whose decision to stay in Agok is influenced by information, services and insecurity, disaggregated by the County of displacement

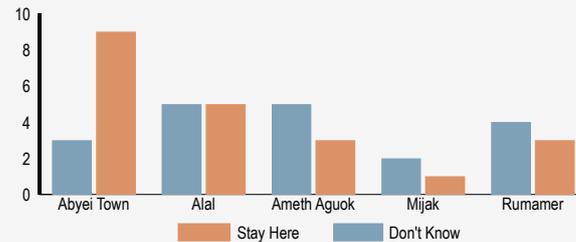
Limited information about the area of return



Insecurity in the place of return



Insecurity in the place of return

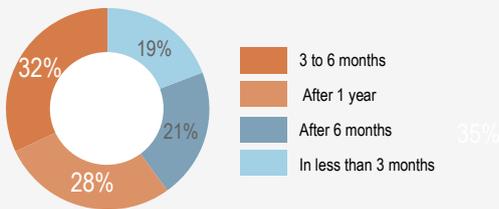


3. Anticipated Time of Return/ Resettlement

Among the 80 per cent of households who intend to return (78%) or settle elsewhere (2%), 28 per cent intend to return after a year, 21 per cent after 6 months, while more than half intend to return within the next 6 months (32 per cent intend to return in a period of 3 to 6 months and 19 per cent intend to return in less than 3 months). Out of the households who intended to return in less than 3 months, 54 per cent are from Abyei Town, but there remains a significant proportion (28%) who indicate returning only in more than one year. The volume of households who intend to return in 6 months is high likely due to dry season, which allows easier mobility and avails adequate supply of shelter materials. Dry season falls between December 2017 and May 2018.

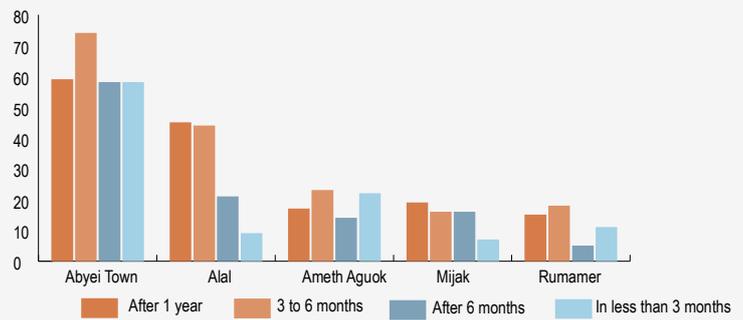
Graph 2.2.4

Anticipated time of return / settlement



Graph 2.2.5

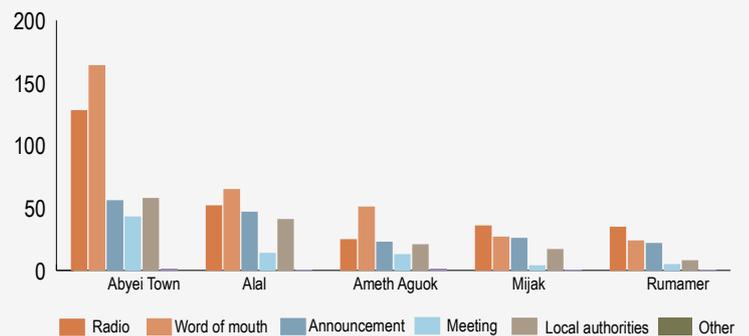
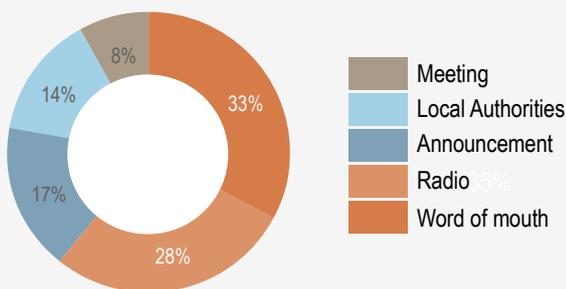
Anticipated time of return / settlement



Different tendencies are observed when comparing households from Abyei Town with households from Alal and Mijak Counties. Only 8 per cent and 7 per cent of the households who intend to return in less than three months are from Alal and Mijak Counties respectively. The observation that households from Alal and Mijak Counties are less likely to return soon could be related to the perceived insecurity in these areas of return, or due to the limited provision of basic social services in and lack of accurate and adequate information about the areas of return.

Graph 2.2.6

Duration of return disaggregated by the County of displacement



Source of information by county

The major source of information for displaced communities in Agok is word of mouth at 33 per cent, followed by radio at 28 per cent. Word of mouth is common for households displaced from Abyei Town, Alal and Ameth Agouk Counties, whilst radio is the most common source of information for households displaced from Mijack and Rumamer Counties.