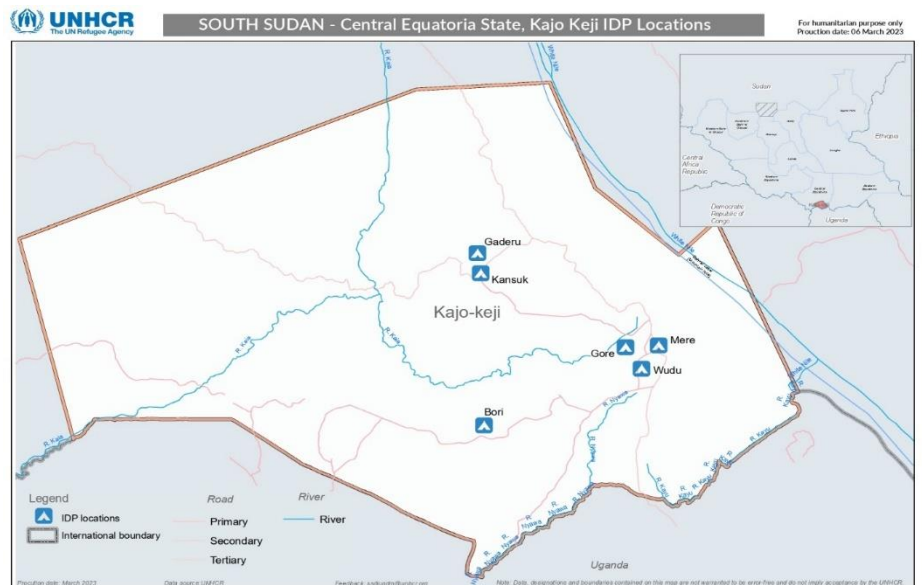




Protection partners providing core relief items in Kajo-Keji

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Conflicts between armed cattle keepers from Dinka Bor and the local population of Kajo-keji broke out on 2nd February 2023. They resulted into loss of lives and displacement of the civilian population from Kansuk Payam, Lire Payam – Likamerok Boma, Mondikolok, Liwolo and part of Kangapo 2 – Bori and Kinyiba Bomas to Kajo-keji town and the surrounding locations. Some 19,750 people (5,200 households) were displaced to six sites in the county and 27 people including two women from the host community were killed and several others wounded. Three critical survivors were referred to Uganda for further treatment.



ASSESSMENTS

An interagency needs assessment was conducted to determine the urgent needs and protection concerns. The findings indicate that out of some 19,500 displaced, over 14,500 IDPs are women and children who fled without any goods or food. Houses and household items were burnt, especially in Nyepo Payam (Gederu and Kansuk), while farms/gardens were destroyed by the cattle which is the genesis of the conflicts. The IDPs expressed fear to return to their homes alleging that some of the cattle keepers still come around to search for lost cattle.



House and household items burned in Nyepo/Gederu Boma.
PHOTO: UNHCR/E.Lisok

URGENT NEEDS

The most urgent needs reported were food, NFIs, WASH and dignity kits as well as psychosocial support as most of the displaced are traumatized by witnessing the clashes and killings.

PROTECTION ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF THE INCIDENT ON THE AFFECTED POPULATION

The protection situation is still fragile, safety and security remain a main concern given that, despite Government orders, cattle keepers continue to linger in the area, moving from location to location. Their presences in the vicinity of Kajo-Keji towards Kayaya River still pose threat especially on Juba – Kajo-Keji road and Kajo-keji – Morobo – Yei Road. There are no apparent indications of revenge attacks, however there is high possibility that the youth will organize themselves for defense purpose.

Access to Kajo-Keji for humanitarian actors from Yei is through Uganda. To try and mitigate the situation, the Governor of CES had travelled to Yei through the internal road (Kajo-Keji – Morobo – Panyume road) in an attempt to reopen the road but clearance for humanitarians is still pending. This might have negative impact by raising the prices of goods in Kajo-Keji. On a positive note, a convoy from Juba led by the Logistics Cluster was able to arrive.

The population in Kajo-Keji is mainly comprising of South Sudanese former refugee returnees from Uganda who started to prepare for the next farming season.

The most likely mid term impact of the incident will be reflected in the inability of the local communities to prepare for the next farming season and the mental health impact of loss of life and livelihoods as well as physical and moral wellbeing. In the longer term, food security situation will be challenging in 2022 and 2023, which may prompt some to opt to cross back to refugee camps in Uganda.

PROTECTION RESPONSE

The protection response was conducted through the Protection Cluster State focal point (UNHCR) in Yei and the field Protection Cluster focal point (ALIGHT) with support from the National Protection Cluster. The protection partners involved in the response comprised of Plan International, TITI foundation, Nonviolent Peaceforce, Norwegian Refugee Council, UNHCR, ALIGHT and Danish Refugee Council mobile response teams.

The partners have reached some 11,000 people with goods and services that includes; Non-Food Items (NFI), dignity kits, services for GBV survivors or people at risk, targeted protection services to people with special needs, psychosocial assistance to children and caregivers as well activities designed to monitor the protection environment, trends and impact.

Specifically, protection partners identified people in need and distributed clothing, buckets, jerrycans, blankets and sleeping mats to 3,181 people (665 households) but more is needed to reach all PSNs. UNHCR/DRC mobile team responded to the women and girls needs with 1000 dignity kits and 200 specialised kits for mothers.



Identification and immediate support to people with special needs (PSNs)

SPECIFIC PROTECTION RESPONSE BY AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (AoR)

Gender Based Violence

- Over 2000 women and girls of reproductive age have received dignity kits.
- GBV Case management services were provided by ALIGHT to 49 females at Mere Women and Girls Friendly space and 17 women and girls were referred for other assistance.
- GBV cases referred, were responded to by MSF at Kajo-Keji hospital and other health facilities run by Goal and Concern Worldwide through a mobile modality.
- WGFS: ALIGHT reached 283 women and girls with individual and group counselling at two IDPs sites and at Mere women and girls' friendly space (WGFS). In addition, 163 women and girls were provided with GBV NFIs and ALIGHT reached 1,457(456 women, 406 girls, 198 men, 397 boys) with awareness raising campaigns on GBV prevention and response. Also 60 women and girls were enrolled in skill building activities at Mere WGFS.
- A GBV safety audit was conducted jointly by Titi Foundation and ALIGHT, in collaboration with protection partners in Mere, Gore, Bori, Wudu, Kansuk and Gaderu IDP sites.

Child Protection.

- Plan International identified and registered into case management activities 54 boys and 24 girls as vulnerable children with different protection concerns including child neglect, living with vulnerable caretakers and loss of parents amongst other child protection concerns.
- 388 children from two IDPs sites received psychosocial support while 25 adolescents enrolled for life skills activities.
- Two Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) are functional in Kangapo 2 and Lire Payams within the IDPs sites.

Housing Land and Property

There is potential for HLP issues to arise and there is need for HLP Due Diligence to be undertaken given that land issues are sensitive and can be a potential source of conflict among the host and displaced communities including returnees. The provision of shelter materials and possible putting of new structures at the areas of displacement as well as mitigation of cases of encroachment in returnee houses by IDPs will involve a protection sensitive approach.

GAPS AND CHALLENGES

- Increased need for security and safety actions as IDPs expressed fear to return to their places of origin due to the likelihood of another attack.
- There is limited protection capacities on the ground to conduct regular protection monitoring and response including HLP issues. Capacities are low also for mitigation of child protection issues including limited child friendly spaces.
- High MHPSS needs resulting from the traumatic incident have not been addressed due to lack of capacities including a major gap in availability of PSS support to GBV survivors and a major gap in adequacy of PSS providing staff.
- Community-based protection mechanisms need establishment or strengthening at all sites.
- Access to Kajo-Keji through the internal roads is a challenge given the presence of the cattle keepers along the road.
- Access to education is disrupted and children do not attend school.
- Loss of livelihood is especially dire on women and mitigation activities are needed to prevent further deterioration.
- Girls have dropped out of school due to the incident and do not know if they will resume.
- Some women also lost their livelihoods in the process and their homes were destroyed which has destabilized them.
- Partners have exhausted the supply of dignity kits.
- Women and girls sleep in unlocked doors/windows at the IDPs structures sites. This may pose them at risk of GBV incidence.
- Lack of segregated latrines/urinary shelters for males and females at IDPs sites.
- Males and females share the same accommodation rooms especially in Bori sites which can put women and girls at the risk of SGBV.
- Limited availability of staff with individual/group counselling skills.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **To ensure safety, and security of the civilian population**, there is need for high level advocacy with the Government and removal of the cattle keepers from the area.
- **Protection by presences and patrolling to the affected locations** needs to be enhanced. UNMISS could consider establishing a temporary base or conduct regular missions to Kajo-keji.
- **There is a need to address the legal aspects of GBV incidents.** A mobile military court is recommended.
- **Need more protection partners** on the ground to cover the needs, preferably in a static form, or backed-up by regular mobile missions.
- **MHPSS activities are recommended** for both GBV survivors and the public. There is need for mass awareness raising campaigns and community-based activities mitigating key protection issues including prevention of suicide and mental health
- **Child friendly space activities** as well as identification/verification of separated and unaccompanied children to be enhanced.
- **Investigation of human right violations** and criminal acts need to be conducted by relevant authorities and UNMISS Human Rights section engaged.
- **Conduct a HLP Due Diligence** and engage HLP issues in relevant Cluster responses.
- **Need to strengthen the field coordination mechanism** with support from State and National clusters as well as a need to establish or update referral pathways in coordination with AoRs.
- **The State Protection Cluster and National PC to enhance support** including missions to strengthen the existing protection response and enhance protection mainstreaming in all Clusters.
- **Enhance support for women and girls including provision of dignity kits, clothes and other NFI**, especially in areas such as Bori, Kansuk and Gederu which were worse off, and the need is high.
- **Need to establish additional women and girls' friendly spaces** in all IDP sites.
- **Capacity building of community protection mechanisms** to support the women, girls and GBV survivors.
- **Ensure Protection mainstreamed into CCCM activities**, and the establishment/strengthening of protection sensitive camp management groups.
- **Need for unconditional cash assistance for persons with specific needs and GBV survivors.**
- Ensure any activity to promote **return to areas of origin is informed, voluntary, safe, dignified, protection sensitive** and conducted in a manner that reinforces IDPs rights.