



BACKGROUND

The Protection Monitoring Work Group (PROMO) Protection Monitoring System (PMS) Analysis is a monthly snapshot intended to complement the monthly statistical report with a joint contextual analysis of the data and information collected including through PMS's Key Informant Interviews with the chief purpose to inform the humanitarian response stakeholders in South Sudan on protection relevant findings, advocacies, and key messages by the Protection Cluster.

ANALYSIS

During the regular PROMO meeting on March 10th, some 30 Protection Cluster PMS focal points met to discuss the available statistical findings derived from the system, assess key geographical areas of immediate need for humanitarian intervention and issue recommendations.

The 2022 - 2023 dry season in South Sudan has seen an increase in communal and non-international armed conflict, leading to the forced displacement of over 100,000 people since December 2022, which in turn reflect the recorded increases of protection related violations and challenges. Overall, there are a reported 2.2 million IDPs in the country.

In February 2023 the monitors for the PMS have noted a marked increase (compared to January 2023) in the lack of security and safety by 15%, child protection issues including child marriages (15%) and recruitment (22%) and family separations (16%) as well as conflict related GBV which is flagged by more that 60% of key informants.

The continued implementation of the peace agreement and the strengthening of safety and security as well as engagement with communities, authorities, peacekeepers and other stakeholders is required to reduce inter-communal violence and enhance the protection environment in South Sudan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address imminent needs and increase the protection frameworks related to child protection, family integrity and overall safety and security the PROMO recommends to all stakeholders and protection actors to:

- **Develop or strengthen early identification of individuals with protection needs in displacement mechanisms** (with special emphasis on mobility) for children and other vulnerable individuals, including GBV survivors. Humanitarians and where possible national service providers need to quickly establish referral and services in hotspots while awareness raising and training for the community on GBV and child protection, needs to follow immediately.
- Child recruitment is high in communal conflicts, with some communities viewing children as young as 15 years old as grown men. To combat the increase in child recruitment it is recommended for humanitarians to **create awareness in the community on the rights of children and the need to protect them from recruitment**. Of special concern are reports of girl recruitments (some 10% of KIs report that occurrence) warranting further investigation to mitigate risks including child labor and GBV risks.
- **All relevant clusters** (WASH, Education, Food, Shelter and NFI, CCCM, etc.) **are recommended to increase their sensitivity and capacity to detect child protection and GBV issues**, including labor, marriage, and recruitment. Advocate for partners in the field to include identification and referral mechanisms in their programmes and approaches including in schools.
- **Target the traditional leaders and youth groups in the communities with trainings and programmes mitigating the issues of violence, GBV and safety and security.**
- Advocate with rule of law actors (including customary courts) to **increase their engagement with GBV and physical violence cases** and remove many of the root causes of any further deterioration in the protection environment.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Considering the knowledge on overall context in the country as well as the process of inter-sectorial needs assessment actors in prioritizing deployment of emergency assistance, the PROMO team analyzed known hotspots (for which PMS data was available) in South Sudan against protection triggers as advocacy for immediate deployment of support or material assistance to the following areas of the country and further engagement with authorities and other stakeholders to reduce or prevent further violence.

In Kajo-Keji and Yei counties in Central Equatoria Conflicts between armed cattle keepers and the local population of Kajo-Keji in February 2023 resulted in the loss of lives and displacement of some 19,750 civilians to six IDP sites in the county. It is highly likely that the impact of the incident will create mid- and long-term food insecurity while safety and security concerns are ongoing. The most urgent needs reported are food, NFIs, WASH and dignity kits as well as psychosocial support as most of the displaced are traumatized by witnessing the clashes and killings. More information on the situation in Kajo-Keji is available on: [PC SSD Kajo-Keji County Protection Situation Report - February 2023 | Global Protection Cluster](#)

Rumbek North in Lakes State and four counties in Warrap State – according to authorities, the death toll in February’s clashes between armed youths from Rumbek North County of Lakes State and the Luacjang community of Tonj East County in Warrap State has risen to 151. Clashes are mostly related to cattle-raiding. Furthermore, of note in several Warrap counties is the noted increase in child recruitment requiring advocacy and mitigation.

According to PROMO findings, the recruitment of child soldiers in Tonj and Gograil is high. The conflict has been ongoing since 2020, with cattle raiding and inter-communal fighting being the primary instigators, alongside border issues with neighboring communities. Compounding matters are land disputes, inadequate access to justice, and a weak justice framework.

The foremost concerns in Warrap State are child protection, gender-based violence, and domestic abuse. People carry guns, including children, to protect their cattle during the dry season, leading to a rise in seasonal recruitment.

To mitigate these issues, concerted efforts must be made to promote child protection, improve access to justice, and reduce corruption. Addressing the root causes of communal disputes and border issues is essential in reducing the risk of conflict and should remain a priority for the local authorities and community stakeholders. With these measures in place, we can safeguard the children of Warrap State and promote a more peaceful future for all.

Twic, Warrap State - Twic is currently facing a border and intra-communal conflict over the claim of possession of certain areas with communities in Abyei, leading to widespread displacement of people last year. The dispute has created a tense situation between communities, with each side asserting their right to ownership of the land in question. As the conflict continues, families are being forced to flee their homes, leaving behind their possessions and livelihoods. The situation has caused significant upheaval and uncertainty for those affected, leaving them vulnerable and in need of support.

Munuki payam, Rejaf payam and Juba Na Bari in Central Equatoria – feature a high level of concentration of SSD population including IDPs and returnees. Those are also basis of several large companies operating with less considerations on child labor policies. With Child labor being among the highest reported protection violations (83% of Kis across the country mention it as an issue) in South Sudan, the PROMO calls for a strengthened approach in delivery of prevention campaigns and mitigation actions to address this challenge including advocacy for implementation of the Child Act. The protection partners highlight that the issue of child labor in Juba County must be addressed through collaborative efforts and long-term strategies to break the cycle of poverty and ensure that children are given the opportunity to thrive.

Northern counties of Jonglei State - In Northern Jonglei State, conflict is a significant cause of suffering for the people living there. The impact of conflict has been particularly hard on children, who often find themselves supporting their families due to the loss of parents or other caregivers. In some cases, children are heading their households, which puts them in a very vulnerable position.

Child labor and child recruitment are prevalent in the area, as many children are forced to work to support their siblings and themselves. This deprives them of the opportunity to attend school, which is essential for their prospects. Additionally, child marriage rates are high, which further limits the opportunities for girls to receive an education and reach their full potential. In Pigi/Canal, many people have returned from neighboring countries such as Ethiopia and Sudan, despite the challenging circumstances. Children are occupied with various forms of work and are unable to attend school.

It is crucial to address these issues and ensure that children in Jonglei State have access to education and are protected from exploitation. In some areas affected by conflict, most houses have been burned down, leaving people with no choice but to live in the open or in temporary shelters. People fear moving around, particularly in areas where conflict is ongoing or where violence has occurred in the past. Gender-based violence (GBV) is also a significant concern in these areas.

Access to humanitarian services is limited, although it is still possible to access some assistance. However, the lack of access to basic services such as healthcare, clean water, and education remains a significant challenge for the people living in these areas. According to reports, there is an ongoing risk of mobilization of children in the area which raises concerns about the safety and well-being of children.

Aweil Centre County, Northern Bhar-el Gazal State - There are significant concerns about child labor, access to humanitarian assistance, child recruitment and labor, gender-based violence (GBV), restriction of movement and safety and security in Aweil impacting the displaced community and host community in some areas within the State.