

This daily report is produced by OCHA in collaboration with humanitarian partners. The next report will be issued on 25 May.

I. HIGHLIGHTS/KEY PRIORITIES

- The security situation in the wider Abyei area remains highly volatile and significant population movement has been confirmed
- Determining the whereabouts of the displaced population is the key priority
- The Humanitarian Coordinator visited Abyei, Agok and Turalei and called on all parties to respect and protect the civilian population including to ensure safe passage of civilians on the move
- Newly displaced people in Agok and local residents fled southwards fearing an attack on the town
- Humanitarian partners are reinforcing their presence in key locations in Warrap State in southern Sudan to respond to the needs of the affected population

II. Situation Overview

Security

In Abyei town, further looting and burning of tukuls has been reported.

The town of Agok, south of Abyei, has been largely emptied of civilians since late on 23 May, amidst fears of an imminent deterioration in the security situation. During the early hours of 24 May, local sources reported that Agok town was calm but tense.

Some NGOs with operations in Agok are reported to have relocated outside of the town during the night, returning next day to conduct scheduled activities. However, security concerns required cancellation of a planned food distribution. The distribution will be undertaken tomorrow, subject to feasibility.

Tensions increased in Khartoum and Juba on 24 May as the Sudanese Parliament declared its support for the military operation in the Abyei area. The Defence Minister, Abdel-Rahim Mohamed Hussein, announced that in the absence of new arrangements on the status there would be no military withdrawal. A southern Minister in the Sudan Government of National Unity, Luka Biong Deng, resigned from his post in protest.

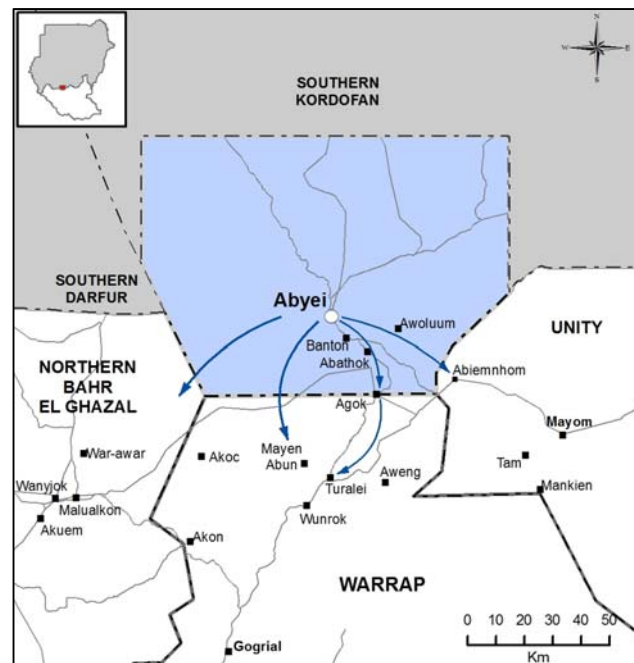
Population movements

The situation remains fluid with significant population movement. However, determining the locations and numbers of the displaced remains a challenge, as people are still on the move. The bulk of the civilian population of Agok and those recently displaced from the Abyei area, are reported to have fled further south to various locations including to Turalei. Reports indicating people are moving even further south are being verified.

The Governor of Warrap State held a meeting in the state capital Kwajok at which she noted significant displacement to Turalei, Mayen Abun and Wunrok.

Humanitarian Coordinator visits Kadugli, Abyei, Agok and Turalei

The Humanitarian Coordinator, Mr. Georg Charpentier, accompanied by the heads of WFP, UNHCR, UNMIS Civil Affairs, the UNMIS Force Commander and other UN officials, conducted a mission to some of the



affected areas to assess the situation and meet with humanitarian workers, government officials and UNMIS personnel. They held meetings with the Governor of South Kordofan in Kadugli, and with UNMIS officials in Abyei and Agok. They visited the market area in Agok and witnessed civilians loading belongings onto trucks and preparing to leave. Further south in Turalei, they met with the Commissioner and NGO representatives.

In a statement, the Humanitarian Coordinator called on all parties to take the necessary measures to protect the civilian population and their property, to ensure the safe passage of civilians on the move and to safeguard their right to return. Mr. Charpentier called for unimpeded humanitarian access in order to ascertain the whereabouts of the displaced population, conduct assessments, and provide the necessary emergency relief. The Humanitarian Coordinator also called for the provision of a safe and conducive environment for humanitarian workers, including respect for humanitarian assets and emergency stocks.

III. Humanitarian Needs and Response

While humanitarian agencies are unable to conduct needs assessments in Abyei due to insecurity, a number of assessment missions have been conducted in Warrap State.

The UN-NGO interagency assessment team that arrived in Agok on 23 May continued to Turalei this morning and met with IOM staff in Turalei. The assessment team visited the returnee site near Turalei, to assess whether it had the capacity to accommodate displaced people from Abyei area. A follow-up interagency coordination meeting in Wunrok will inform operational plans.

Early findings from another interagency team that traveled to Mayen Abun and Turalei on 23 May identified food, non-food items and shelter as the most urgent needs of the displaced population. In Mayen Abun, local residents are believed to be hosting many of the displaced population. In addition, a group that appeared to consist of recent returnees and people affected by the recent clashes in Abyei, has gathered in and around the local school.

The assessment team reported that the displaced population consisted primarily of women, children and elderly, and noted that they had few belongings. The flow of people arriving was reported to have increased by late 23 May, with private trucks transporting people who had been walking. On 24 May, IOM began the verification process and confirmed 2,238 displaced people in Mayen Abun. IOM also confirmed the arrival of eight trucks during the night of 23-24 May. Food distributions are expected to take place on 25 May.

The assessment team also visited Turalei. IOM started registration of the displaced population and will share the information with partners to facilitate addressing the most urgent needs including food, non-food items and shelter.

For both locations the mission recommended that the education, protection and emergency shelter clusters undertake assessments urgently. The team also observed unaccompanied children which require protection interventions. Reports of displaced people in Anjak Kuak remain unverified.

IV. Coordination

The Inter-Sector Working Group met with cluster lead and co-lead agencies to continue operational planning, and confirm cluster preparedness and response capacity mapping. Priority is being placed on establishing the location and number of displaced persons and identifying areas of highest needs. It was also agreed that protection of civilians should form a key component of all the response plans. IOM confirmed that 10 trucks will be deployed in the coming week to provide common transport in affected areas, while the logistics cluster will also be supporting fuel supply.

A further inter-cluster coordination meeting was held in Wunrok late on 24 May on planned and ongoing operational responses.

The Government of Southern Sudan Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management has called an emergency Humanitarian Coordination Forum on 25 May in Juba. The meeting will comprise senior Government officials, donors, UN and NGO representatives.

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