

9 July 2014

SOUTH SUDAN

Greater humanitarian and development efforts needed to meet IDPs' growing needs

Violence has spread quickly throughout South Sudan since the outbreak of civil war on 15 December 2013, when tensions flared within the army in events the government has called an attempted coup. Other armed groups have joined the conflict, as what began as a struggle between two leaders has become a vehicle for people to express complex political, social and economic grievances.

More than a million people, or around one in ten of the country's population, have been internally displaced and more than 390,000 have fled the country ([OCHA](#), June 2014). Attention and assistance has focused on the 95,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) sheltering in the UN peacekeeping mission's military bases ([UNMISS](#), June 2014), but 90 per cent of those fleeing their homes have taken refuge elsewhere, and have little access to protection, services or humanitarian aid.



Women doing laundry in a site for displaced people in Malakal town, South Sudan.
Photo: OCHA, February 2014

Displacement in the country is primarily a protection concern, and extends far beyond the material needs of the newly displaced for food, water, shelter and non-food items. What is now South Sudan has a long history of underdevelopment and conflict, and the multiple causes of displacement make for complex dynamics that frequently overlap. Some key drivers, however, can be identified in escalating armed conflict, recurrent natural hazards and considerable development challenges, which are all further complicated by a lack of inclusive governance and socio-economic marginalisation.

The capacity and willingness of government and opposition forces to protect civilians is questionable, given that both parties have committed grave abuses against them ([protection cluster](#), May 2014). It has largely fallen to the international community to protect and assist IDPs, but many humanitarians and their donors have been caught off guard by the scale of the crisis and have not been able to respond immediately and effectively.

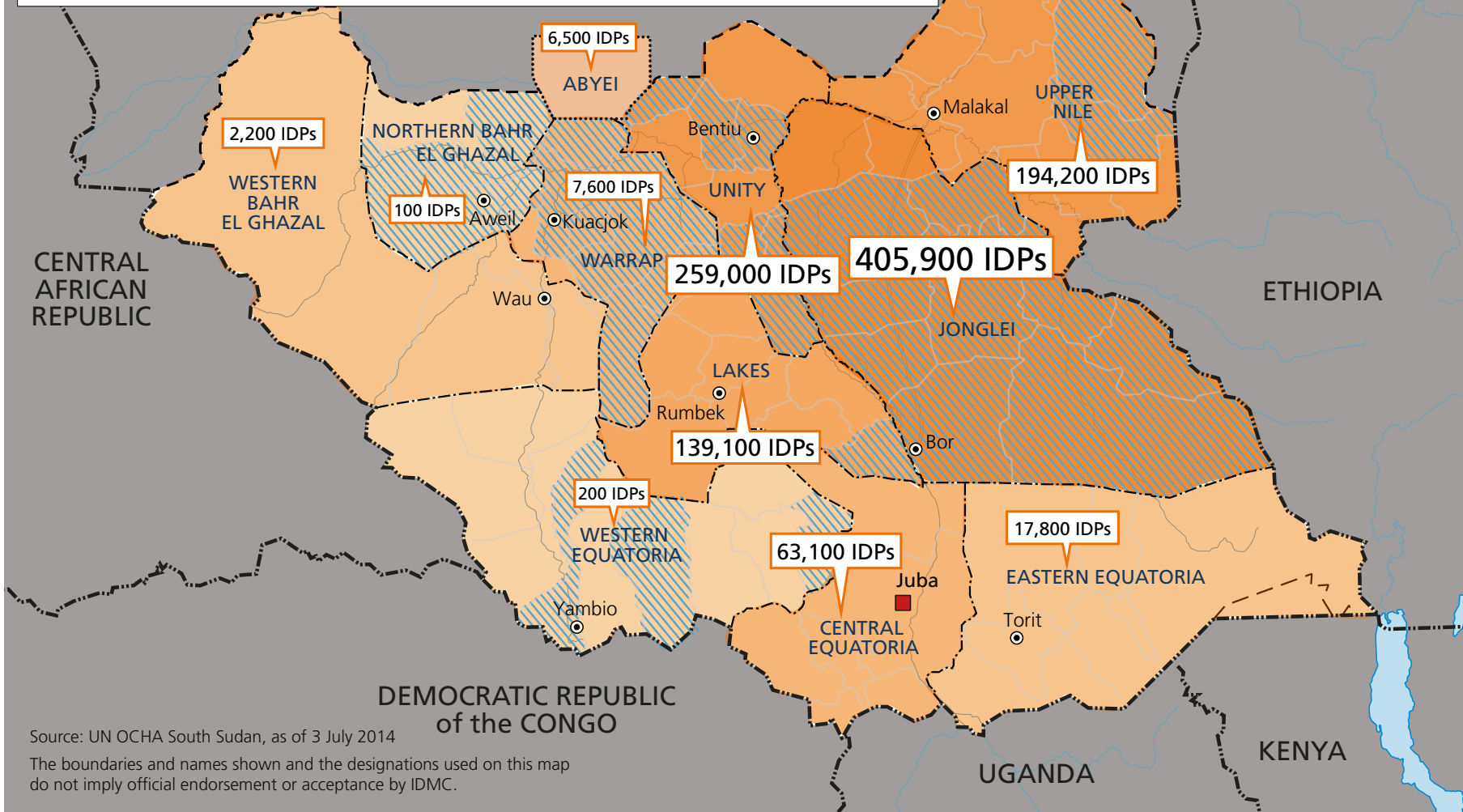
In February 2014, the UN declared the situation in South Sudan a level-three emergency, the most serious possible. Despite this, the response continues to be hampered by insecurity, logistical constraints, the looting of aid supplies, the harassment of aid workers, bureaucratic obstacles and uncertainty about funding.

Displacement in South Sudan

9 July 2014

- National capital
- County boundary
- Displacement by conflict (by state)
- International boundary
- Disputed area
- Flooding (by county)
- Undetermined boundary
- State boundary

0 100 200 km **IDMC** internal displacement monitoring centre



Source: UN OCHA South Sudan, as of 3 July 2014

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IDMC.

Map by: IDMC

More maps are available at www.internal-displacement.org/search?Type=Map

Background and causes of displacement.

Conflict, violence and human rights violations since independence

Conflict caused primarily by power and wealth imbalances between northern and southern Sudan began in the run-up to independence from British rule in 1956 ([UNMIS](#), n/d). Two civil wars – the first between 1955 and 1972 and the second between 1983 and 2005 - human rights abuses, the deliberate deprivation of access to food and the use of displacement as a tactic of war forced millions of people to flee their homes, particularly in what is now South Sudan ([ICG](#), November 2002; [Enough](#), n/d).

By the time the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) ended the second civil war, around two million people had been killed and four million internally displaced. Under the CPA's provisions, the South Sudanese people voted in a referendum on independence in January 2011. They chose to secede from Sudan and on 9 July 2011 a new state uniting 60 ethnic groups was born ([ICG](#), November 2012). The Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) became the largest party in a majority government, and its military wing, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), became the national army.

As neither the CPA nor independence have put an end to conflict and displacement, the government has struggled on many levels. It has been unable to absorb hundreds of thousands of South Sudanese people returning from Sudan and neighbouring countries; to establish the legitimacy of the state; to protect marginalised and minority populations; to provide equitable public services and economic opportunities in both rural and urban areas; to lead a genuine process of reconciliation and inclusive development; to maintain social cohesion between ethnic groups or to build a shared South Sudanese identity.

Violence has continued unabated and ethnic identities have been exploited for political gain, leading to the outbreak of civil war in December 2013. Armed clashes between Sudan and South Sudan have also caused displacement, the result of unresolved disputes over borders and access to oil fields. Both countries accuse each other of supporting armed groups on their territories ([ICG](#), November 2012; [OCHA](#), June 2013).

Cattle rustling and disputes over access to natural resources such as grazing land and water have also forced people to flee their homes, but such displacement cannot be addressed as a standalone issue despite its seasonal and relatively predictable nature.

Conflict since 15 December 2013

Disagreements within the ruling party led to divisions within the army on 15 December 2013, which in turn sparked clashes between its various factions in most of South Sudan's ten states. The violence spread quickly along ethnic lines and other armed groups joined the conflict, as what began as a struggle between two leaders became a vehicle for people to express complex political, social and economic grievances at the national and local level ([ICG](#), April 2014; [protection cluster](#), May 2014). More than a million have been internally displaced, and more than 390,000 have fled the country ([OCHA](#), June 2014).

All parties to the conflict have committed serious human rights violations and grave breaches of international humanitarian law, and the targeting of civilians has reached alarming levels. The combatants have carried out extrajudicial killings, forced disappearances, rape and arbitrary detentions. Prisoners have been tortured, access to basic services deliberately denied and civilian property, including hospitals, destroyed ([protection cluster](#), May 2014; [HRW](#), June 2014). Hate speech, revenge killings and recrimination have fuelled the violence further ([OHCHR](#), April 2014), and displacement has been both a coping mechanism

for those affected and a deliberate tactic of war ([protection cluster](#), May 2014; [HRW](#), April 2014).

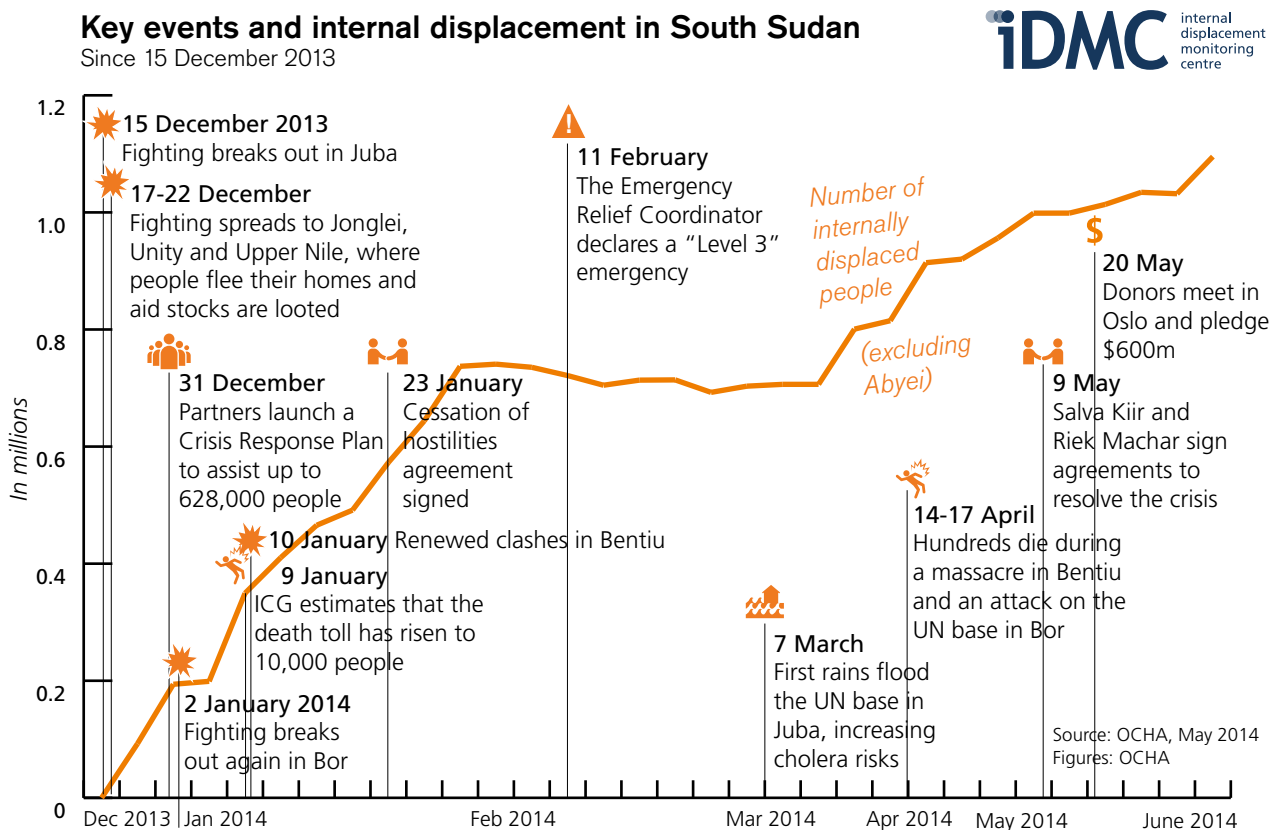
Natural hazards

Disasters brought on by natural hazards, particularly widespread flooding during the rainy season, cause regular displacement. They destroy housing and crops and kill livestock, reducing the capacity of those affected to recover. Some of the areas worst affected by flooding in 2013 were also hosting the highest numbers of people displaced by conflict and violence, meaning that many IDPs have suffered combined impacts ([OCHA](#), November 2013; [OCHA](#), December 2013). As of mid-May 2014, 475,000 people fleeing the conflict had taken refuge in areas prone to flooding, leav-

ing themselves vulnerable to secondary displacement. This year's floods may mean that others are unable to flee violence as a coping strategy ([UN](#), May 2014).

Evictions

Evictions associated with land grabs and development projects have caused displacement, though on a relatively small scale so far. The special rapporteur on IDPs' human rights noted after his mission to South Sudan that such cases had been observed in urban areas including Juba, Aweil, Wau and Rumbek ([SR on IDPs](#), June 2014). Some IDPs fleeing violence have occupied other people's property, also putting them at risk of eviction.



Despite numerous efforts to solve the crisis in South Sudan, the number of internally displaced people keeps rising.

Displacement figures and patterns

Figures

Between 15 December 2013 and 3 July 2014, more than 1,089,200 people, or around one in ten of South Sudan's population, were internally displaced ([OCHA](#), June 2014). At an average of more than 5,600 people a day, almost twice as many people have fled their homes in the past seven months than in the previous three years combined, constituting the country's most serious displacement crisis since the 1983 to 2005 civil war ([IDMC](#), June 2012; [IDMC](#), July 2013). The UN estimates that the number of IDPs will have risen to 1.5 million by the end of 2014 ([UN](#), May 2014).

Between January and November 2013, around 189,000 people were also displaced by localised and inter-communal conflicts. Some may have been displaced again during the current crisis, while others appear to have returned to their homes ([OCHA](#), November 2013; [protection cluster](#), May 2014).

Floods damaged or destroyed the homes of around 115,800 people in 2013 (IDMC Disaster-induced displacement database, 18 June 2014).

Data sources and limitations

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) publishes weekly figures on IDPs. It compiles data it receives on an ad-hoc basis from the government's South Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (SSRRC), UN agencies, international organisations such as the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), NGOs, local authorities and community leaders. OCHA is unable to verify all of the figures prior to publication, because many IDPs live in areas that are difficult to access. Thirty per cent of the locations included in its figures for May 2014 were not verified, an improvement on the 53 per cent reported for the previous month (OCHA, April and May 2014).

Given that the displacement situation is highly fluid, populations are widely dispersed, and onward movement and repeated displacement are poorly tracked, OCHA's figures paint an incomplete picture. Information on the exact circumstances in which displacement takes place is often missing ([ACAPS](#), May 2014), and humanitarian organisations only track new displacement caused by conflict and violence. Information on IDPs living in protracted displacement is not available, and data on displacement caused by natural hazards and disasters is rarely collected.

Patterns

All ten of South Sudan's states have been affected directly or indirectly by displacement during the current crisis ([OCHA](#), May 2014), but population movements are difficult to track and patterns hard to discern. They vary significantly depending on the local context and the capacity and resources of those affected. The intensity of conflict and violence has also made movements less predictable, meaning humanitarians need to be even more flexible in their response ([protection cluster](#), May 2014). That said, it has been suggested that the displacement patterns in the first weeks of the crisis could have been predicted to some extent, based on IDPs' cultural and socio-economic ties ([ACAPS](#), May 2014). People tended to flee to places where they could draw on communal ties, and which allowed them access to resources and protection ([ACAPS](#), May 2014). These were most likely to be in rural areas.

Ninety-five thousand people are currently sheltering in civilian protection areas inside UN peace-keeping mission (UNMISS) bases. They account for less than ten per cent of the overall displaced population, but receive significant public and humanitarian attention ([UN](#), May 2014; [UNMISS](#), June 2014). Those who have sought refuge in the bush, on river islands, with host families, in public facilities or on spontaneous sites are less visible and tend to be more vulnerable. They have less access to assistance and services and may have been more exposed to conflict and violence.

Not all of those who might have fled their home areas have been able to do so. The most vulnerable, including children, older people and those with disabilities are often left behind ([UNMISS](#), May 2014). In previous crises, families have split up in an effort to increase their chances of survival ([ACAPS](#), May 2014). Others have died trying to flee, killed by the parties to the conflict or drowning while crossing rivers ([UNMISS](#), May 2014).

Secondary displacement has taken place since the beginning of the current conflict. IDPs have been forced to leave their places of refuge as the fighting approaches or because of tensions with local communities ([protection cluster](#), May 2014). Seasonal flooding could displace thousands of IDPs who have already fled conflict and violence, and prevent others who want to flee from doing so ([UN](#), May 2014).

Protection and assistance needs

Displacement in South Sudan is primarily a protection concern, extending far beyond the material needs of the newly displaced for food, water, shelter and non-food items. IDPs faced protection needs before the current conflict and they have become greater since, particularly given the lack of respect for human rights during all phases of displacement ([protection cluster](#), May 2014). Many places in which IDPs have sought refuge do not provide the access they need for protection, shelter, food, clean water, health services or education ([AI](#), May 2014).

Threats to physical security and psychological well-being

IDPs face numerous threats to their physical security and psychological wellbeing, not only from the parties to the conflict, but also as a result of exposure to inter-communal violence and crime. They have been killed, abducted, arbitrarily detained and subjected to ill-treatment, torture and sexual violence. In April 2014, an armed group at-

tacked the civilian protection area at the UNMISS base in Bor, Jonglei state, based on the ethnicity of its inhabitants, and killed more than 50 people ([HRW](#), April 2014). Some detentions have taken place just outside UNMISS bases, and IDPs' places of refuge elsewhere have also been attacked ([protection cluster](#), May 2014, [HRW](#); April 2014).

Tensions and violence within civilian protection areas has risen as IDPs become increasingly frustrated with their plight, and substance abuse has fuelled disputes, theft and gender-based violence (GBV). The areas are to some extent lawless, given that UNMISS does not have an explicit mandate to carry out arrests in them, and that handing over detainees to state authorities would be problematic because of their involvement in the conflict ([protection cluster](#), April 2014; [IRC](#), May 2014).

GBV is engrained in social norms and practices, and in the current conflict, where the stress of displacement and loss of livelihoods have only served to make matters worse ([CARE](#), May 2014). Women and girls are more vulnerable to GBV, especially in overcrowded sites with little privacy. Uprooted from their familiar environments, they also struggle more to access support networks and health services ([CARE](#), May 2014). Rape has increasingly been used as a weapon of war, and men have been targeted for castration and execution ([HRW](#), May 2014; [IRNA](#), June 2014).

Child protection

Displaced children are particularly vulnerable to the psychosocial stress of displacement, family separation and human rights abuses (child protection sub-cluster, April 2014). There is little data on families that have split up, but it has been noted that women and children have begun leaving UNMISS's protection areas in search of refuge abroad. They leave male family members behind, potentially increasing the risk of violence and attacks from armed groups ([protection cluster](#), May 2014).

Family separation exposes displaced children further to neglect, abuse, exploitation and forced recruitment. All parties to the current conflict have increasingly used child soldiers, and an estimated 9,000 have been recruited ([UNMISS](#), May 2014; [protection cluster](#), May 2014). Displacement sites and settlements may serve as recruiting grounds for both children and adults ([UNMISS](#), May 2014; [protection cluster](#), May 2014). Rapid intervention to demobilise child soldiers and a more systemic approach to the problem is needed, given that all parties have a long history of forcibly recruiting children ([protection cluster](#), May 2014).

Displaced children tend to have little or no access to education, either as a direct result of their displacement or because armed groups have occupied local facilities. Schools can play a vital role in providing psychosocial support and strengthening survival skills and coping mechanisms, including during emergencies, but a shortage of funding and poor access mean humanitarians have struggled to provide education services ([education cluster](#), June 2014).

Food security and livelihoods

Many IDPs' livelihoods have been disrupted as a result of their displacement. Farmers are no longer able to cultivate their land and herders lose their livestock or are unable to migrate with their animals. Food production has dropped significantly as a result, and the problem is particularly acute during the dry season, when drought has the potential to make it worse still. ([OCHA](#), May 2014). Limited freedom of movement in Upper Nile, Unity and Jonglei states has disrupted people's access to markets, some of which have been destroyed during attacks on commercial vehicles and transport. As they are forced to travel further to buy food, women become more vulnerable to assault and sexual violence, and men are more likely to be targeted for torture and killing ([GBV sub-cluster](#), June 2014).

Around 1.1 million people in South Sudan are living in emergency-level food insecurity, the sec-

ond most serious behind famine on the Famine Early Warning Systems Network scale. A further 2.4 million are living in crisis-level food insecurity. The worst hit areas are Jonglei and Unity states, which also host the highest number of IDPs. Unless the government and humanitarians are able to improve the situation, households in some parts of Jonglei and Unity could descend into famine ([FEWS NET](#), May 2014).

Rainy season

During the rainy season, IDPs who only have access to makeshift shelters and those who sleep in the open are exposed to greater risk of ill-health and secondary displacement. For the time being water-borne diseases such as cholera affect the general rather than the displaced population in particular, but they are spreading and IDPs in overcrowded sites with stagnant water, including UNMISS bases, are at risk ([ACAPS](#), May 2014). In the past, humanitarian organisations have prepositioned aid for the rainy season, because large parts of the country become cut off. This year, however, prevailing insecurity and a shortage of funding have prevented them from preparing properly ([IRIN](#), June 2014).

Durable solutions

Little information is available on whether IDPs have achieved durable solutions in the past year, and if so how many, because no systematic assessment of returns, local integration or resettlement has been undertaken. Given that some of the poorest families continue to move for many years after their initial displacement, there is very little understanding of the issue.

The current conflict has displaced huge numbers of people, but the fluid nature of the violence has enabled others to go back to their places of origin. Some IDPs from Pibor county in Jonglei state returned home at the beginning of 2014, after the government and the South Sudan Democratic

Movement/Army (Cobra Faction) signed a cessation of hostilities agreement. Pibor county had been the epicentre of violence in South Sudan since mid-2013 ([Small Arms Survey](#), April 2014; [Radio Tamazuj](#), April 2014). Other return movements have taken place in Bor ([ACAPS](#), May 2014).

It is questionable, however, whether such returns will be sustainable, given the prevailing insecurity and lack of services in many areas. Access to adequate accommodation is also an issue. All parties to the conflict have destroyed housing, in some cases burning or destroying entire villages ([protection cluster](#), May 2014; [UNITAR](#), n/d), meaning that transitional solutions such as improving living conditions in displacement areas are likely to be necessary ([protection cluster](#), May 2014). If this requires the relocation of IDPs, such a move should be voluntary. Both IDPs and their host communities must be properly consulted and alternatives offered.

As displacement becomes protracted, the likelihood of IDPs and armed groups occupying other people's property and land increases, which in turn lays the ground for future conflicts. Secondary occupation has already been reported in Juba ([protection cluster](#), May 2014). Vulnerable groups and women in particular are likely to be disproportionately affected, given their weaker inheritance and land rights ([NRC](#), 2014). Land disputes and uncertain tenure were already a concern before the current crisis, and they are complicated by the lack of formal demarcation and deeds, and cumbersome and costly legal processes ([protection cluster](#), May 2014). Procedures for resolving disputes between displaced and host communities are needed to ensure that both groups' housing, land and property rights are respected and future tensions and conflict prevented.

Access to basic services needs to be re-established and improved to allow IDPs to lead a productive and risk-free life. This includes the reconstruction of public infrastructure such as schools and health centres destroyed in the fighting ([protection cluster](#), May 2014). Many IDPs and returnees, particularly those living in South Sudan's many border communities, also struggle to obtain or replace identity papers and other documents. Without them, they are at risk of statelessness as a result of the country's independence ([SR on IDPs](#), June 2014).

Preparedness for displacement, its prevention and the achievement of durable solutions in its aftermath can only take place through development processes, and these should complement the humanitarian initiatives undertaken during the emergency phase. Forward thinking on durable solutions is paramount from the outset, given the lead times for development programming. Education, for example, can be vital to the achievement of durable solutions, but it is neglected and underfunded during emergencies, making its resumption more difficult later on.

A number of policy and legal frameworks could be used to shape such a strategy. The IASC Framework on Durable Solutions clearly lays out the issues of concern at all stages of displacement, and the UN Secretary General's 2011 decision on ending displacement in the aftermath of conflict offers both guidance in terms of a durable solutions strategy and a useful tool for monitoring agency roles, responsibilities and accountability. The Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region (Great Lakes Pact) and its protocols on internal displacement, to which South Sudan acceded in 2013, also provide extensive guidance.

Former Southern Sudanese IDPs still in Sudan

Since the 2005 signing of the CPA an estimated two million people of South Sudanese origin, who had been IDPs before South Sudan became independent, have returned to South Sudan (SR on IDPs, June 2014). As of 31 December 2013 there were 10,500 IDPs in Khartoum (OCHA database, December 2013). The Four Freedoms agreement signed by Sudan and South Sudan in 2012 aims to ensure freedom of movement within and between the two countries and allows people of South Sudanese origin to remain in Khartoum if they wish ([African Arguments](#), October 2012). Despite independence, significant numbers of South Sudanese would like to stay in Sudan ([International Refugee Rights Initiative](#), June 2013). A number of factors, however, including harsh living conditions and direct harassment and discrimination, mean that most feel they have little choice but to return to South Sudan despite the uncertainty that awaits them there ([SR on IDPs](#), June 2014). In 2014, few returns have taken place, and there are rumours of returnees going back to Sudan (IOM, June 2014).

Since 2007, around 2 million people of South Sudanese origin, who had been IDPs before independence, have returned from Sudan (IOM, email correspondence, June 2014). The returns have largely been voluntary and IOM has led considerable logistical operations to facilitate them. The extent to which the process has laid the foundations for durable solutions is, however, unclear.

The Four Freedoms agreement signed by Sudan and South Sudan in 2012 aims to ensure freedom of movement within and between the two countries for the citizens of each. Under it, people of South Sudanese origin should be able to stay in Sudan if they wish ([African Arguments](#), October 2012), and research has shown that many would prefer to do so, particularly in Khartoum ([IRRI](#), June 2013). A number of factors, however, including harassment, discrimination and poor living conditions, mean that most feel they have little choice but to return to South Sudan despite the uncertainty that awaits them there ([SR on IDPs](#), June 2014).

Returnees' choice of final destination is restricted. Urban land is expensive and rural land, though offered free as a part of a government policy to encourage returns, may be in areas unfamiliar to them ([SR on IDPs](#), June 2014). Returnees to such areas have no social networks to rely on and they are often left without any real service provision, transport or communications infrastructure ([IOM](#), June

2013). Some returnees have been given land in areas prone to flooding, exposing them to the risk of renewed displacement ([SR on IDPs](#), June 2014).

Anecdotal information suggests that many returnees eventually relocate to urban centres in search of better livelihoods and services, especially those who lack the skills to lead a rural life after many years living in Sudan's town and cities ([ODI](#), May 2013; [SR on IDPs](#), June 2014). Only a few returns have taken place in 2014, and there are increasing suggestions that returnees are going back to Sudan (IOM, email correspondence, June 2014; Interview humanitarian actor, June 2014).

National response

National authorities made efforts to provide relief and engage in the return process before the current crisis, but a lack of comprehensive data and understanding of displacement hampered an effective response. The vast size of the country poses significant governance challenges, and the government has also struggled to fulfil its leadership role in humanitarian and development coordination bodies. SSRRC is the government agency in charge of coordinating relief and reconstruction efforts in the aftermath of both conflict and disasters ([Government of South Sudan](#), n/d).

The capacity and willingness of the government and opposition forces to protect the civilian population is questionable, given that both parties are said to have committed grave abuses against non-combatants, including IDPs ([protection cluster](#), May 2014). National NGOs have played an important role in providing services and humanitarian aid thanks to their close community ties, and funding for their work should be increased as part of a faster, more effective response ([South Sudan NGO Forum](#), May 2014).

The government and opposition forces signed a ceasefire agreement in January 2014, but it has not been fully respected. Negotiations towards a more comprehensive peace agreement have continued in Addis Ababa ([HRW](#), June 2014). It is essential that the parties address the causes of the conflict, put transparent and inclusive political processes in place, end impunity, facilitate reconciliation and repair community cohesion at the national and local level. As a result of the ongoing insecurity and violence, the country's president, Salva Kiir, announced in May that elections planned for 2015 would not be held until 2017 or 2018. It is also unclear whether a vitally important national census will take place and how it will be financed ([Reuters](#), May 2014).

South Sudan is still to ratify most of the key international and regional human rights treaties, though it is the process of doing so in some cases ([UNMISS](#), May 2014). It has acceded to the Great Lakes Pact and its protocols on internal displacement, and it has signed but not yet ratified the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention), much of the content of which is reflected in the Great Lakes protocols. As such, a clear legal framework exists to inform the national authorities' engagement with all aspects of internal displacement, and the international community should work to support this.

The New Deal for Fragile States ([New Deal Snapshot](#)) should have been an opportunity for

donor countries to show their long-term commitment to resolving displacement in South Sudan. The country started its New Deal process in 2012, it held consultations in all ten states during 2013, and a donor meeting took place in New York to prepare a roadmap in September 2013 ([G7Plus](#), September 2013). The process, however, has come to halt since December, and displacement was all but absent from the initial fragility assessment that created the framework for consultations.

International response

The international response in South Sudan has long focused on humanitarian assistance. Before the current crisis, a stronger development focus on supporting an inclusive state, extending security and protection and addressing marginalisation and social exclusion might have improved efforts to prevent and prepare for displacement, and to facilitate durable solutions. Since December 2013, however, a number of development projects have been put on hold or cancelled. It is hoped they will resume as soon as the situation allows ([VOA](#), March 2014).

In February 2014, the UN declared the current crisis a level-three emergency, the most serious possible. A dedicated deputy to the humanitarian coordinator was deployed, and greater surge capacity for the emergency response was mobilised. The humanitarian coordinator in South Sudan also serves as the UN resident coordinator and deputy chief of UNMISS.

Fighting, insecurity and logistical constraints have hampered humanitarian access, and heavy rains and flooding will make the situation worse during the rainy season. Even if funding is increased to improve logistics, many IDPs are likely to be deprived of desperately needed support ([AI](#), May 2014). Both government and opposition forces have restricted access by obstructing aid delivery, looting supplies, harassing aid workers and imposing bureaucratic impediments ([UN](#), May 2014; [IRC](#), May 2014).

Many humanitarians and their donors have been caught off guard by the scale of the current crisis and have not been in a position to respond immediately and effectively ([ICG](#), April 2014). Funding remains a major challenge. The UN's South Sudan strategic response plan for 2014, which was developed to assist and to protect those in need, particularly IDPs and host communities, appealed for \$1.8 billion. As of the end of June, however, it was only 42 per cent funded, hampering initiatives to put in place early warning systems and alert networks, and to carry out protection monitoring ([FTS OCHA](#), June 2014). It is encouraging that a humanitarian donor conference in Oslo in May pledged \$600 million, but most of the money is still to be disbursed ([Oslo Conference](#), May 2014).

UNMISS

[UNMISS's mandate](#) has recently been re-adapted in response to the current crisis, putting the protection of civilians at the core of its activities and reducing its focus on capacity building with the government and security forces ([UN news](#), May 2014). This is a sensitive issue, given that the government is a party to the conflict and the army has been accused of violating humanitarian law. UNMISS has until now struggled to protect the civilian population beyond its bases, because the force's role in doing so has not been clearly defined and the government has repeatedly put severe constraints on its freedom to operate ([UNMISS](#), May 2014).

Abyei

Neither Sudan nor South Sudan's displacement figures take into account the number of people displaced in and from Abyei area, because its status remains disputed. An incursion by the Sudanese armed forces drove more than 100,000 people from their homes in May 2011. Other causes of displacement are complex and include tensions linked to nomadic migrations, such as those of the Misseriya ([HSBA](#), May 2014).

As of December 2013, 20,000 members of the Ngok Dinka ethnic group were displaced in Abyei and 25,000 outside the area (OCHA, December 2013). Little information on new displacements is available, but in May the UN reported incidents of inter-communal violence and the movement of members of the Ngok Dinka community from central to southern Abyei to escape the activity of armed groups ([UN SG](#), May 2014).

Chapter IV of the CPA is dedicated to the resolution of the Abyei conflict. It envisaged a vote in parallel to the referendum in southern Sudan to define the area's status ([CPA](#), 2005). The vote, however, has been postponed several times and the provision is still to be implemented. In October 2013, the Ngok Dinka community organised an unofficial referendum on whether Abyei should be part of Sudan or South Sudan. Many displaced people returned to the area to cast their ballots, and 99.9% of voters expressed the wish to join South Sudan. The referendum, however, was not recognised by Sudan, South Sudan or the international community. In June 2014, several Ngok Dinka leaders rejected the creation of a joint administration as set out in UN Security Council resolution 2156, and called instead for the result of their referendum to be accepted ([Sudan Tribune](#), June 2014)

Abyei has also been affected by the current crisis in South Sudan. At least 6,500 South Sudanese people have arrived in the area since December 2013, increasing pressure on already scarce resources ([OCHA](#), May 2014).

The Sudanese and South Sudanese governments must organise a vote on Abyei's status as a matter of urgency. As things stand, the status of people displaced in and from the area is uncertain, and it is unclear who is responsible for assisting and protecting them beyond temporary arrangements (SR on IDPs, June 2014).

About the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) is the leading source of information and analysis on internal displacement. For the millions of people worldwide displaced within their own country, IDMC plays a unique role as a global monitor and evidence-based advocate to influence policy and action by governments, UN agencies, donors, international organisations and NGOs.

IDMC was established in 1998 at the request of the Interagency Standing Committee on humanitarian assistance. Since then, IDMC's unique global function has been recognised and reiterated in annual UN General Assembly resolutions.

IDMC is part of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), an independent, non-governmental humanitarian organisation.

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