



*Lack of respect for humanitarian personnel and assets remains a serious concern across Western Bahr el Ghazal, which continues to impact aid operations.*

agents arrested staff from two NGOs in Raja, allegedly because the vehicle that took nutrition supplies to Raja left without clearance. The two aid workers were released the following day. Three individuals working for a humanitarian organization were arrested on 15 August while conducting food security and nutrition monitoring surveys, and they remain in detention in Baggari area. Partners continue to investigate the circumstances of the arrest and to negotiate for their release.



Nutrition screening in Mboro. Photo: WFP/Shane Yates.

## Western Equatoria: dangers to humanitarian workers and assets rise

The operating environment is increasingly hostile towards aid workers in Western Equatoria, with a growing number of incidents, including killings, ambushes, robberies, threats, intimidation and harassment among others. In addition, partners have not been able to access populations in Mundri East and Bangolo, Mundri West for months, with restrictions imposed by local authorities into perceived opposition-controlled areas.

Humanitarian organizations and passenger vehicles are frequent targets of ambushes along key roads, with valuables, including money, computers and mobile phones, taken from passengers. In September alone, at least seven humanitarian vehicles have been ambushed in Nzara, Mvolo, Mundri East and West counties, and humanitarian supplies have been looted on different occasions.

An aid worker of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was shot and killed in a clearly marked humanitarian 10-vehicle convoy on 8 September after delivering aid in several locations in Western Equatoria, including in Kotobi, Mundri West County, two weeks earlier. The incident happened after all parties to the conflict had been notified of the ICRC's presence in the area. Consequently, ICRC suspended aid operations in the area to allow the organization to assess the security situation.

In Mundri East, armed men entered an NGO compound in Lui on 23 September, assaulted two staff members and stole a number of valuables. An NGO national staff member was also reportedly abducted by armed men in the same location on 16 September. As a result, staff members from the affected organization relocated from the area due to safety concerns.

In Mundri West, government security officials confiscated a passport of an NGO worker in Mundri town and took samples of medicines during a preparatory meeting for a mission to deliver medical supplies and drugs outside Mundri town.

### Insecurity in Western Equatoria



In Mvolo town, water, sanitation, hygiene and household supplies were looted during distributions involving youths who went to the distribution centre and caused a commotion. Partners continue to engage with authorities to ensure safe and undisturbed distributions in the future. A truck transporting nutrition supplies was also looted and staff members were assaulted by an armed actor in Mvolo County.

Insecurity was also reportedly impeding internally displaced

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people in Yambio town from returning to their places of origin. Their agricultural land has reportedly been occupied by armed elements, who are not allowing them to return.

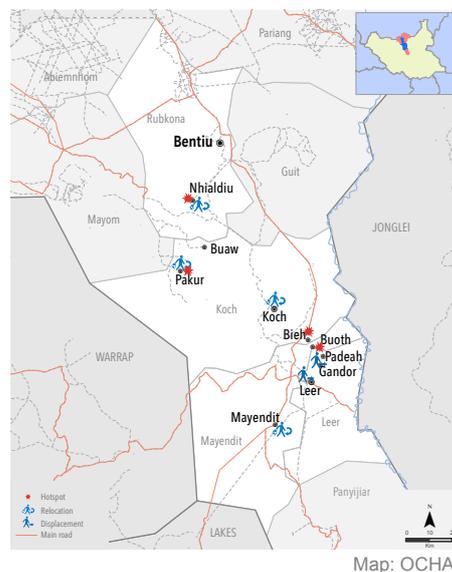
The overall impact on humanitarian efforts and on affected people in Western Equatoria is a reduction in consistent and timely delivery of services. As incidents become more regular and widespread, aid organizations are forced to consider their operational continuity in an environment that is not conducive to meeting the needs of people in the region.

## Displacement and relocation of aid workers due to fighting in central Unity

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### Relocations in Central Unity



Following increased threats of insecurity and imminent clashes, on 6 September, eight humanitarian staff members were relocated from Mayendit town, as a precautionary measure. The following day, 31 aid workers relocated by road from Pakur, Buaw and Koch town to Bentiu, following reports of clashes in multiple locations in Koch County. Eight aid workers also relocated by foot to a location north of Koch, from where they were airlifted on 8 September.

Partners temporarily suspended food airdrops and the scheduled general food distribution to more than 25,000 conflict-affected people in Buaw and Buoh due to insecurity in Mayendit and Koch counties at the beginning of September.

The attacks have reportedly left Pakur completely burned down, including offices of humanitarian agencies and a health centre. In retaliation to the attacks in Pakur, an offensive

was launched in Bieh. Local people, including aid workers, fled into the bushes. An NGO health and nutrition facility in the area was vandalised and looted of supplies. These incidents temporarily displaced about 500 civilians into the Leer temporary protected area and thousands were reportedly displaced to Padeah and Gandor, Leer County.

Fighting also broke out in Nhialdiu, Rubkona County, on 18 September, and continued on 25 September. According to local authorities, 16 people were wounded in the initial clashes and over 10 people, including two children, were reported killed. The civilians have fled into the bushes surrounding villages of Nhialdiu. A water point was destroyed and a local NGO health facility was looted completely, including medications, beds, nutrition supplies and other hospital equipment. Humanitarian staff of the local NGO have fled to Bentiu town and the health facility remains closed.

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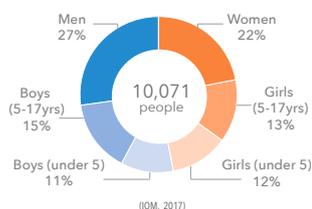
From January to August 2017, there were seven security incidents in Koch, Mayendit and Leer counties that forced the relocation of 91 aid workers and impacted the timely distribution of assistance and provision of humanitarian services. The three counties were classified in emergency food insecurity status (IPC Phase 4) in June-July, with about 25,000 people estimated to face catastrophic levels of food insecurity.



Clinic looted in Nhialdiu. Photo: CASS

## Fighting in Aburoc halts response, displaces civilians

### People in Aburoc by sex and age



Fighting on 11 September in and around Aburoc, on the western bank of the River Nile, displaced civilians and forced the temporary relocation of 33 humanitarian staff, working with 10 NGOs and one UN agency, from Aburoc to Malakal.

As a result of the fighting, three civilians were reportedly killed, including a pregnant woman. One humanitarian compound was looted and one school was occupied by military forces. An undetermined number of people fled to the bush, and cases of sexual and gender-based violence were reported. About 10,700 people had been staying in Aburoc before the fighting.

Two weeks after the relocation, a small number of humanitarians returned to Aburoc to resume provision of life-saving services. A Rapid Response Mission (RRM) team has also arrived in Aburoc to conduct general food distribution, and carry out nutrition screening, distributing nutritional and vitamin A supplements, and deworming.

Partners are also assisting people with special needs in different locations on the western bank of the River Nile, including Kodok, Lul and Wau Shilluk.

Due to the presence of military along the western bank of the Nile in this area, humanitarian partners have met with local authorities and called for the demilitarization of Aburoc, as well as of other locations in Fashoda County.

## High-level event on South Sudan calls for accountability for escalating humanitarian needs

A high-level meeting was held in the margins of the United Nations General Assembly on 20 September in New York to draw international attention to the escalating humanitarian crisis in South Sudan, with participation from UN Member States, regional organizations, UN partners and members of civil society.

While recognizing that humanitarian needs will only continue to grow until the fighting stops, participants applauded the early warning and collective efforts by humanitarian partners to ease famine conditions in South Sudan earlier this year and to prevent famine from taking hold elsewhere.

Participants paid tribute to the commitment, bravery and professionalism of humanitarian workers in South Sudan, and to those who have lost their lives while saving others. They condemned the killing of 85 aid workers since the conflict started in 2013, including 18 this year alone. Participants called upon all parties to consistently allow safe, rapid and unhindered access for humanitarian staff, equipment and supplies, and to eliminate bureaucratic access impediments. They also called for accountability for attacks directed against aid workers and all civilians.

Donor support to the South Sudan crisis has been pivotal to reduce loss of life in the crisis. This has included the US\$263 million contributed through the Central Emergency Response Fund and \$580 million through the South Sudan Humanitarian Fund since December 2013. However, there was a recognition that donors should provide additional flexible and needs-based funding to the response, as the highly prioritized 2017 South Sudan Humanitarian Response Plan and the South Sudan Regional Refugee Response Plan remain underfunded, and severe humanitarian needs will persist into 2018.

**Read more:** *Co-chairs' summary of the High-Level Humanitarian Event on South Sudan* -- <http://bit.ly/2fV8bMm>

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OCHA humanitarian bulletins are available at: [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int)