



MULTI-SECTOR OVERVIEW OF THE HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN YUAI, UROR COUNTY

SOUTH SUDAN

PROFILE

JULY 2016



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC

REACH Informing
more effective
humanitarian action

This assessment was conducted with the support of the Jonglei State Solutions Working Group (JS-SWG), along with representatives from the following:



Photo credits: Marco Pizzolato

About REACH

REACH is a joint initiative of two international non-governmental organizations - ACTED and IMPACT Initiatives - and the UN Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT). REACH's mission is to strengthen evidence-based decision making by aid actors through efficient data collection, management and analysis before, during and after an emergency. By doing so, REACH contributes to ensuring that communities affected by emergencies receive the support they need. All REACH activities are conducted in support to and within the framework of inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. For more information please visit our website: www.reach-initiative.org.

Contents

Geographic classifications.....	3
List of tables and maps	3
Introduction	3
Methodology.....	3
Key informant interviews	4
Focus group discussions	4
Individual interviews	4
Findings.....	4
Population in Yuai.....	4
Settlement patterns of host communities in Yuai.....	4
Settlement Patterns of IDPs in Yuai	5
Cattle migration routes	5
Movements IDPs and host community	7
Return of IDPs from UNMISS Bor PoC	7
Humanitarian Situation.....	9
Livelihood opportunities.....	9
Food availability and coping strategies.....	9
Access to safe drinking water.....	10
Available services.....	10
Shelter.....	11
Access to information.....	11
Conclusion	12

Geographic classifications

State	Highest form of governance below the national level.
County	States are divided into counties.
Payam	Counties are divided into payams.
Boma	Payams are divided into bomas.
Village	Bomas are generally composed of between 2 and 10 villages.

List of tables and maps

Map 1 Nyrol, Uror and Akobo counties	3
Map 2 Primary reported cattle migration routes from Yuai town.	6
Map 3 Reported walking distance to Yuai's surrounding locations	7
Table 1 Primary cattle migration routes.....	5
Table 2 Reported walking distance to surrounding locations from Yuai town.	7
Table 3 Reported number of enrolled children in Yuai town and surrounding main towns.....	11
Table 4 Reported available food types and related percentages of KIs reporting the availability.	11

Introduction

Since the beginning of the South Sudanese crisis in December 2013, more than 1.69 million have been internally displaced. The majority of internally displaced persons (IDPs) have fled to remote areas across the country, while more than 200,000 IDPs residing in UN Protection of Civilians (PoC) sites.¹ Following the partial implementation of the peace agreement signed in August 2015, some areas have become more stable. This has triggered the return of many people to their areas of origin, including refugees who had fled to neighbouring countries such as Ethiopia, and IDPs displaced elsewhere in South Sudan. Over the past few months, a total of 75 households and 206 individuals have been relocated from Bor PoC to the Akobo East area. In the coming dry season, positive conditions permitting, a new wave of voluntarily return of IDPs willing to settle in the other two counties part of the Greater Akobo area, Uror and Nyrol, is planned (Figure 1).

The Greater Akobo area, located on the eastern border of South Sudan in Jonglei State, continues to be seen by many IDPs in Bor PoC as a potential safe haven where they may be able to resume something resembling their pre-crisis lives. After the relocation of the first group in Akobo East, the Jonglei State Solutions Working Group (JS-SWG) deployed a team to Yuai Town, Uror County, to conduct a first assessment from the 5th to 7th of April 2016,² followed by a second one from the 3rd to the 5th of June 2016. The two assessments confirmed the possibility that the communities would be willing to host voluntarily returned IDPs. To build this understanding, the JS-SWG team connected with local authorities and humanitarian partners on the ground to assess the availability of services in the area.

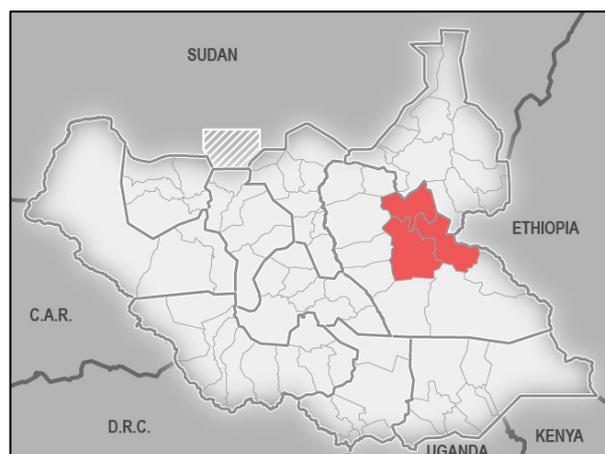
Uror County has a population of approximately 225,685³ individuals living in the eight Payams: Karam, Motot, Pathai, Puolchuol, Wuror, Pieri, Payai and Tiam. In the early stages of the crisis, an influx of IDPs from different part of the country sought refuge in their ancestral homes, while many others left the country for Ethiopia. In sum, since the beginning of the crisis, the area has experienced an estimated influx of 77,059 individuals and an out-flux of 53,185 individuals.

This report summarises the findings of seven focus group discussions (FGDs), 17 quantitative key informant interviews executed with a pilot questionnaire, and three individual interviews conducted from 3rd-9th June by

REACH. The quantitative interviews were conducted by team members belonging to different organizations while the FGDs and individual interviews were conducted by REACH after the JS-SWG's mission in Yuai to provide humanitarian partners further contextual information on the area and improve understanding of the capacity of the area to host additional IDPs and returnees.

This research fits into the wider framework of REACH's assessment of hard to reach areas in Greater Upper Nile State. The assessment furthers the understanding of the pre-crisis and current humanitarian situation in Jonglei, Upper Nile, and Unity States, through quantitative and qualitative interviews with KIs that have received up-to-date information about communities in the area.

Findings from data collected in Yuai are outlined in the following sections. First, the methodology used to collect data is explained in detail, followed by a profile of the population living in the area. An analysis follows outlining the extent to which basic services, food, shelter, and livelihood opportunities are available, and concludes by explaining how people are accessing information about the general situation around the country.



Map 1 Nyrol, Uror and Akobo counties

Methodology

To inform the relocation process of IDPs from Bor PoC to Yuai Town in Uror County, REACH employed a mixed-methods approach to assess on-going population movements, living conditions, and the availability of humanitarian services in Yuai.

¹ <http://www.iom.int/news/iom-targets-vulnerable-populations-remote-areas-south-sudan>

² Bor Solution Working Group "Report on Follow-up Assessment of the Uror Return Area in Yuai", 1st to 3rd June 2016

³ Lisa Jordan, Summary of County Populations in South Sudan Updated for December 2015", Spatial Data Center Drew University April 2016

Key informant interviews

The questionnaire "Common Assessment Tool", developed in coordination with OCHA, the JS-SWG and the Inter Cluster Working Group was piloted during this mission. The tool proved applicable for country wide rapid multi-sectorial assessments and complement REACH's larger scale assessment of hard to reach areas.

To pilot the closed-ended questionnaire "Common Assessment Tool", quantitative data collection was conducted in Yuai town by trained international staff helped by translators when necessary. The majority of the interviewees were selected from NGO staff that had knowledge of the humanitarian situation in the area. All quantitative data was collected using Open Data Kit (ODK) collect.

This report analyses the data provided by 17 interviews, with the aim of providing baseline data on the humanitarian situation. It is important to note that these findings refer to a limited dataset geographically restricted to Yuai town area.

Focus group discussions

Qualitative data collection was conducted by REACH staff in Yuai, supported by a local facilitator who knew the context and the area and a community mobilizer. Due to poor movement conditions, villages far from the town were not accessible, and FGDs had to be conducted within walking distance of Yuai town. However, the team still took steps to ensure that an equal number of IDPs and individuals from the host community were mobilized for FGDs.

Each of the seven FGDs included six to seven participants currently living in Yuai Town. The community mobilizer pre-selected the participants, recording their names and ensuring their presence at the FGDs. Efforts were made to ensure an equal gender balance whenever possible.

The question route included a set of core questions, each of which was followed up with between one and five "probing" questions designed to provide further details. The analysis of the FGDs relied on field notes taken by moderators and were manually coded. After each FGD, a debriefing form was completed by the facilitator.

Individual interviews

Individual interviews were conducted to provide a complete overview of the situation, while crosschecking the information previously collected by the FGDs, collecting details that only a sector specialist can provide.

Three additional individual interviews were carried out with the following individuals:

- Chief of Police for Yuai town and surrounding villages;
- Health Facility Manager;
- Uror County Education Director.

Findings

Population in Yuai

Settlement patterns of host communities in Yuai

Unlike Akobo,⁴ settlement patterns of host community in Yuai are not informed by seasonal migration and the population remains in static locations for most of the year instead of migrating during the change of seasons. When undertaking movements out of the village, the FGD participants reported that they were able to move freely and securely in all of the Greater Akobo area populated by their community but felt insecure moving near the borders of other communities, which they generally avoided.

Since the onset of the crisis, it was reported that many inhabitants have left Yuai and the surrounding areas to go to Ethiopia, passing through Akobo town, a nexus for all cross border movements. The first migration waves were triggered by the initial outbreak of fighting close to the town between SPLA positions in eastern Duk County and SPLA-IO positions in western Uror County, which pushed people to search for more secure areas. During the heavy shelling, the FGD respondents belonging to the remaining host community reported having to flee into the bush with only a few essential items, along with enough food to last them up to ten days at a time, before cautiously returning to abandoned areas once the sound of the guns had ceased. Cross border monitoring revealed that further movements out of the country were triggered by a widespread lack of food and worsening of basic services such as health and education as the armed conflict continued.⁵ Respondents stated that these factors have also informed on-going internal displacement patterns as people have been forced to move into areas where they hear a food distribution will take place, or better health facilities are operating. For instance, the host community in Yuai transports patients who require advanced treatment such as for kalazar, wounds and tuberculosis all the way to Lankein on foot. Respondents reported that none of the people who left as refugees or IDPs have returned to the area yet, saying that they do not know when they will decide to come back. However, they expect that an end to violent conflict or

⁴ REACH_SSD_Report_Akobo_MultisectorialOverview_Mar2016

⁵ REACH_SSD_factsheet_akobo_port_monitoring_april_2016

establishment of better and more widespread services will likely draw people back.

Host community respondents stated that they had stayed for different reasons, namely to protect their cattle and other property. Female respondents further reported that they remained to provide support to their husbands and male family members engaged in fighting on the front line. The presence of relatives abroad in Ethiopian or Kenyan refugee camps was cited as additional reason for remaining, most probably due to the fear of not being able to reconnect with those who had left once they decided to come back.

Settlement Patterns of IDPs in Yuai

Immediately following the outbreak of the crisis, Yuai experienced an influx of different people who shared ties with the local community and had previously migrated to urban areas for job-related reasons or the presence of higher level services, particularly education and health.

IDPs that took part in the FGD who had been residing in Juba, Bor, Malakal, Khor Fulus and in Western Equatoria reported coming to the area right after the onset of the crisis mainly as they felt at risk due to their ethnicity. Some of them reported choosing Yuai area as their final destination because it was the place where they had resided before they had moved to urban areas. Others reported to have chosen Yuai because it was their ancestral home and the location where their ethnic sub-group belongs to. Other sporadic IDPs influxes have been reported overtime, with people moving towards areas where food distributions periodically occur. This was the case of a number of households who had been displaced to Yuai from Fangak County and are now sheltering in an abandoned compound in town.

The IDP influx was also driven by cattle raids in surrounding areas and neighboring payams. Particularly vulnerable categories of IDPs, such as women and children, were driven to more populated and secure areas for safety, leaving behind only the adult male members of the household to guard their properties.

These groups have been reported as not willing to leave Yuai in the near future, despite the fact that some of them are sheltering in makeshift shelters and in abandoned buildings in town.

Cattle migration routes

Movement of people belonging to the local community is, unlike most host communities, informed by the seasonal cattle migrations which take place every year during the dry season. Young men and experienced cattle keepers move with their cattle from Uror's inland territories to the five wetland areas listed in Table 1 using the routes displayed in Map 1, where the cattle are able to feed an abundant green grass. All of the routes are reported to be

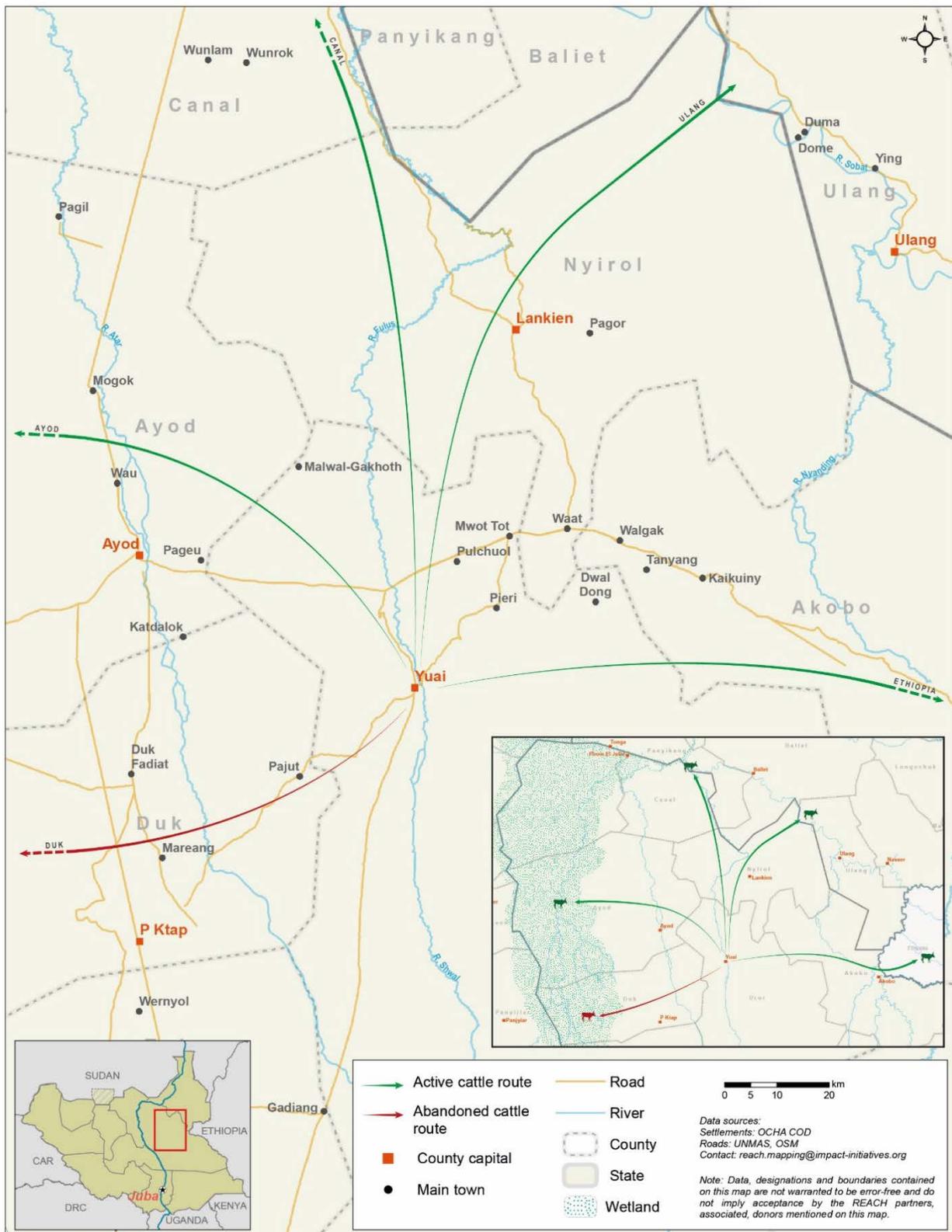
active except for those crossing the Dinka territories heading to Duk County, which were abandoned during the 2014 dry season.

Ninety-four percent (94%) of the KIs in the quantitative interviews reported people still have their cattle, of which 65% have reportedly been able to move them to a safe location, while 29% are directly watching over them. The same percentage of interviewees reported that people still possessed other types of livestock, such as goats and chickens. Eighty-two percent (82%) of KIs reported that these animals were with their owners, while only 12% of KIs reported that they had moved them to another safe location.

Table 1 Primary cattle migration routes.

Cattle routes		
State	County	Location
Jonglei	Ayod	Toch (wetland) area
Jonglei	Duk	Toch (wetland) area
Jonglei	Canal / Khor Fulus	Khor Fulus White Nile and Sobat river
Jonglei	Akobo	Gile river area in Gambella region - Ethiopia
Upper Nile	Ulang	Yakwach area

Map 2 Primary reported cattle migration routes from Yuai town.



Movements IDPs and host community

Similar to previous research assessments conducted in Akobo East,⁶ fear of violent cattle raids, is an important factor limiting people's mobility and thereby reducing their capacity to exploit available natural resources. In addition, while in general host community members reported moving around the area more than IDPs, both groups restricted their movements in the border area close to Pajut village to avoid ambushes carried out by soldiers stationed in the area.

The quantitative data collection confirms the FGD findings; 65% of the KIs reported tribal or community conflict as a major security risk when moving to nearby counties, followed by attacks by armed groups (reported by 53% of the KI respondents).

Table 2 Reported walking distance to surrounding locations from Yuai town.

Walking distance from Yuai		
Town	Dry season	Wet season
Akobo	5 days	8 days
Dakriang	11 hours	13 hours
Karam	9 hours	11 hours
Lankien	4 days	5 days
Mwow-Tot	8 hours	10 hours
Ngop	11 hours	13 hours
Payai	3 hours	4 hours
Pajut	6 hours	8 hours
Pathai	4 hours	6 hours
Patueth	4 hours	6 hours
Pieri	5 hours	6 hours
Pulchuol	6 hours	8 hours
Thiam	2 hours	3 hours
Waat	10 hours	12 hours
Walgak	12 hours	15 hours
Wei-Khol	2 hours	3 hours

When moving, most people travel by foot along paths that link Yuai town with the surrounding villages. The change of seasons has a powerful influence on the amount of time required to reach a final destination, as shown in Table 2 and Map 2. In the dry season, there is solid ground and dry vegetation, while the wet season creates

large seasonal ponds and muddy soil which make movement incredibly difficult. A gender imbalance in mobility was also reported between men and women; men would most often take trips to the farthest locations, while women tended to remain in the villages around Yuai.

None of the respondents reported using the commercial cars, which can be used during the dry season to travel to other towns in Uror County; the average cost of motorized transport was deemed to be too expensive for the average person. For most of the wet season, the poor road conditions make the roads unusable by most motor vehicles. Despite the nearby Fulus river, a wet season tributary of the Sobat River, respondents stated that boats were not commonly used for transportation. There are only a few dugout canoes used to cross flooded areas.

Return of IDPs from UNMISS Bor PoC

Respondents had diverging viewpoints regarding the possible return of IDPs from Bor PoC. Some believed that relocation is not possible or feasible only for those with particular connections, such as intermarriage with a member of the local community. Others knew people who had already successfully returned and were aware that more might come in the future. All of the respondents demonstrated solidarity with the PoC residents, stating that they were ready to receive them when and if they arrived, even while acknowledging concerns over stretched resources, particularly regarding shelter and food.

Regarding the security situation, the road through Pajut that potential Bor PoC returnees would have to cover is known to be dangerous; 55% of KIs reporting for it knew of the presence of armed groups, while 45% of the same group of KIs had knowledge of check points along the way. Escort by UNMISS or other local authorities were the only way they felt that they could conceivably make the journey safely.

In an individual interview, the chief of police outlined the necessity for voluntary relocated IDPs to be escorted in convoy while crossing Bor South and Twic East counties until the village of Pajut in Duk County. He noted that there had been several cases of violence towards those who had already made the journey.⁷ After Pajut, he stated that Yuai local authorities and other local police forces from Pulthak-Bil (located halfway between Pajut and Yuai) could escort IDPs. However, until that point, they will require some other kind of security to avoid harm.

⁶ REACH_SSD_Report_Akobo_MultisectorialOverview_Mar2016

⁷ Chief of police and FGDs respondents reported cases of raping and robbery attributed to soldiers, the last recorded on January and February 2016.

Map 3 Reported walking distance to Yuai's surrounding locations



Social cohesion between host community and IDPs

All respondents described relations between the host community and IDPs as having always been very positive and the majority of the displaced population is willingly housed by host community families. Furthermore, respondents reported that they were happy to receive more people, especially from Bor PoC. However, they did express concerns that a new influx might worsen the availability of sufficient food and shelter.

According to respondents, a significant portion of the population, mainly cattle keepers, was not captured in the last food distribution registration in May 2016. Unless the new IDPs are covered by a distribution program, those who are registered will need to share more of their rations with the new arrivals. Some of the respondents noted that, as the growing season has already started, the new arrivals will be unable to plant to provide for themselves, potentially threatening food security in the area.

In addition, there is a potential for overcrowding of shelters. All host community respondents reported that they were either hosting IDPs in one of their tukuls or knew someone who was, and they were concerned that the already cramped situation would become untenable if they were forced to share with too many people as privacy and hygiene decline.

Humanitarian Situation

Participants of both the key informant (KI) interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs) and personal interviews were asked about the humanitarian situation within the Yuai area. In particular, respondents were asked to provide information about livelihood opportunities, food availability and coping strategies, access to basic services, and shelter conditions. The following section outlines the findings for each of these sections.

Livelihood opportunities

Historically, Yuai town and the surrounding areas were characterized mainly by a rural economy based on agro-pastoralist activities with a predilection for cattle herding, supplemented by subsistence farming. A smaller segment of the population fished or collected timber. The same FGD respondents explained that an important contribution to income came as remittances from relatives that were earning salaries as government employees or from running a business in a different town and sent money back to support their relatives.

Since the beginning of the crisis, this alternative source of income was reported to have almost disappeared, with

the exception of those with relatives currently employed by NGOs, leading to general impoverishment. Because of insecurity levels outside of town, the host community is no longer able to exploit natural resources. Individuals in need of money were reported to be earning a small income through small businesses such as selling tea or collecting grass or firewood.

Food availability and coping strategies

FGD respondents described the population in the area as heavily dependent on food distributions for their survival, with IDPs and host community members now having access to the same amount of food. Participants estimated that it would no longer be possible for the host community to rely on food surpluses from the previous year due to the damaged harvest in 2015.⁸

Before the crisis, people were able to practice subsistence farming and could harvest enough crops to survive the dry season. Since the onset of the crisis, all agricultural activities have been scaled down for multiple reasons: First, nearby military forces and the consequent instability has limited the willingness of people to use land located far from town. In addition, respondents reported a lack in agricultural inputs, particularly tools that were lost when they were forced to evacuate the village due to fighting. The respondents further reported a disparity in land available for cultivation between members of the host community and IDPs, and how IDPs were only able to use portions of already cultivated areas.

Despite the large amount of available land, people cultivate exclusively within limited fenced areas next to their dwellings. The main reasons for this is to protect crops from cattle returning to the camps, which are left to graze freely in the area and would easily destroy the crops if they are not protected with a fence. Moreover, respondents reported that they were reluctant to relocate their farms to the outskirts of town, or expand their farm's fences with more material, due to fears over security.

Despite the scarcity of food, the majority of the respondents claimed that they were willing to share food from distributions. At the same time, some participants expressed their concern about food shortages, fearing that they will not have enough food left for their families between one distribution and the other if the number of people in need of support increases further.

The respondents added that they already had to use different coping strategies to overcome the lack of food between two distributions. In particular, people reported reducing the number of meals eaten each day, often eating only one meal a day, while supplementing their

⁸ Both in Yuai and Akobo was reported an excess of birds in the year 2015 that damaged the crop.

diets with wild foods. In the wet season, when the first crops become available, many also harvest them immediately instead of letting them fully mature. When this is not enough, many respondents stated that they borrow food from other people. A few of the more fortunate respondents that possessed cows were able to use them to produce milk or sell them, allowing the owner to buy additional food and goods with the proceeds.

Access to safe drinking water

According to data collected through key informant interviews, 41% of KIs report that the population does not have access to an adequate amount of safe drinking water compared to the 88% of them claiming that they are using boreholes as a primary source for water. This suggests that many of the existing boreholes are malfunctioning. During the FGDs, respondents reported that the 7 (out of 8 total) functioning boreholes were not enough to satisfy the demand of all host community and IDPs, causing long queues sometimes lasting between two and three hours. In addition, boreholes were reported to not be very productive, most likely due to the wearing of the internal mechanical parts. Respondents described the water coming from some of the boreholes as being opaque in colour, which suggests a possible ingress of polluted superficial water rich in suspended sediment, which impairs the overall quality.

In one FGD, respondents also reported inhabitants collecting water from the river and shallow wells during the dry season. However, it was not specified whether the water was used for drinking or for other purposes. During quantitative data collection, many IDPs, (35% and 23% of the KIs group), reported that the population was collecting drinking water from unsafe sources such as puddles and hafirs, respectively.⁹

Asked about the sanitation facilities used, 53% of respondents from the same group reported latrines as the most common toilet facility used in Yuai town, showing that a majority of respondents did not practice open defecation.

Available services

Health

Because of cuts in both supplies and salaries, the available health services in Yuai have been under stress since the beginning of the crisis. This has made the presence of NGOs operating in the sector extremely vital. All the FGD participants reported that there were only two health care facilities working in Yuai town, which served both the town and the surrounding areas. One is a PHCU (Primary Healthcare Units) run by an NGO while the

second is a private clinic run by a person who was reported not be a doctor. A third facility, which used to be the county health department, and was afterwards taken over by a national NGO, has been closed since funding for the facility was discontinued.

The health system, represented only by the PHCU, is only able to respond to common diseases and provide basic medical services and treatments. The majority of the FGD participants expressed a negative opinion of the center, both because it is often overcrowded and because treatment is usually provided in the form of tablets and not injections. The person in charge of the health clinic explained in an individual interview that many people believe tablet treatments are ineffective while injections and syrups are "real" treatments. He explained how this belief exposes patients to dangerous practices, such as receiving injections from unofficial clinics or performing injections in inappropriate environments, such as at home, where old syringes are often shared or reused.

Eighty-two percent (82%) of the KIs in the quantitative data collection reported that the PHCU was situated within 2 hours walking distance. The most common health problems were reported to be malaria (59%), breathing problems (29%) and diarrhea (27%).

Education

Like other public services, education has suffered from a lack in funding and supplies since the beginning of the crisis. In recent months, however, it has become very fragile, sustained only through volunteer teaching staff and the intervention of a few humanitarian actors.

The education director for Uror County revealed during an individual interview that most schools outside of town were closed due to a lack of adequate staff, while locations in town were open and working. However, many of the tents that were being used as schools have deteriorated and facilities were reported to be overcrowded buildings with no stationary or teaching materials.

School attendance was reported to be very low; with 60% to 70% of the school age children reportedly not attending classes. This is despite the existence of specific programs aimed at providing education to children who are working as cattle keepers and thus not able to be present for the duration of the entire school year. Table 3 reveals that the percentage of male students is higher, with a disparity between male and female averaging anywhere between 15% in Yuai1, and 64% in Pulchuol. Because teachers are not receiving any salary, there is

⁹ Most probably KI respondents confused hafirs with natural puddles used to water the cattle.

little incentive for them to show up to work. Many are also forced to divide their time between teaching and carrying out other income generating activities in order to sustain their families. Most FGD respondents were aware of these problems, but are unsure of how to solve them.

Table 3 Reported number of enrolled children in Yuai town and surrounding main towns

Reported number of enrolled children				
Location	Boys	Girls	Total	Δ%
Mow-Tot	1076	451	1527	+41%
Payai	577	272	849	+36%
Pamai	456	278	734	+24%
Patuet	497	352	849	+17%
Pieri	757	283	1040	+46%
Pulchuol	556	122	678	+64%
Yuai1	554	410	964	+15%
Yuai2	647	383	1030	+26%
TOTAL	5120	2551	7671	- -

Markets

FGD participants reported the existence of two functioning markets in Yuai town; a large one recently consisting of iron sheeted structures, and a smaller one made from local-materials. Both reportedly function during dry and wet seasons.

Key informants reported the foods listed in Table 4 as those that are typically available in the market. Fresh fruits and vegetables are almost completely absent.

Around three quarters (76%) of KIs reported that they conducted their trade with cash payments, while only 24% reported obtaining them through barter.

Table 4 Reported available food types and related percentages of KIs reporting the availability.

Reportedly available food, by type	
Food	% of KIs
Cereals and tubers	94%
Meat and fish	94%
Milk and dairy products	82%
Oils and fats	59%
Sweets and sugar	71%

Shelter

Eighty-eight percent (88%) of the KIs reported "tukuls" as the most common type of shelter, while another 12% reported "rakoobas." Amongst the same group of KIs, 53% reported that almost none of the buildings in town have been destroyed by fighting.

Since the onset of the crisis Yuai, inhabitants have not been able to construct more shelters to meet the increase in households. This is because of continuing insecurity that has reduced their ability to acquire raw materials for construction, so only a small number of new structures have been built. Essential materials such as poles for the structure and grass for roofing were usually collected in surrounding wooden areas. These areas are now considered dangerous because of the presence of cattle raiders or soldiers that might attack people who try to collect construction materials.

In addition, many reported that their proximity to active conflict and the accompanying possibility of new attacks acted as a strong disincentive for increasing the number of properties. The lack of incentive and ability to construct new shelters, coupled with the continuing influx of IDPs, has significantly reduced the ability of the host community to accommodate new arrivals. An influx would quickly lead to overcrowding, in addition to a drop in privacy and hygiene conditions.

Access to information

The majority of the population have been using messengers to send information both within and between communities, a traditional method of communication. When one of the following events occurs, messengers are dispatched to all neighboring villages to spread the news as quickly as possible:

- Attack perpetrated by members of a different community
- Cattle raids
- Meeting of all the Chiefs and traditional leaders
- Scheduled distribution of food rations

In the case of a violent incident, adults, usually young men, were dispatched to transmit the messages. Sometimes, more complicated communications were transmitted through writing, though this practice was reported to be very limited due to the widespread level of illiteracy.

Despite the town having an antenna since the beginning of the crisis, there is no phone network available in Yuai. Prior to the crisis, most areas of Jonglei had a mobile phone network. However, since the beginning of the conflict, the majority of mobile phone networks in Jonglei State have had their coverage shut off.

The absence of phone communication has isolated the community, reducing its capacity to interact with people living in other communities, particularly those who have left the country as refugees or are living in PoC sites.

Due to their isolation, respondents reported that it was very difficult for them to follow both national and international political developments, mostly relying on alternative sources of information, such as key people who can get primary access to the news and then spread it by word of mouth. Most of these people either own an electronic device that can be connected to the NGO internet connection, or possess a radio and can understand the Arabic or English broadcasts. Satellite phones were used, though extremely rarely, by local authorities or NGO staff. One female FGD participant reported that she was able to communicate with her family using a satellite phone made available by an NGO.

Finally, many respondents noted the importance of traditional signals such as the opening of previously closed cattle routes and the increase in freedom of movement in proving the establishment of peaceful relations between communities.

Conclusion

The host communities in the Yuai area have already experienced large influxes of IDPs over time. While they have offered what housing and food they can provide, they are now beginning to reach their capacity. Despite the expressed solidarity of all FGD with the PoC residents, and their willingness to receive them back, the environment presents some weaknesses that need to be addressed to ensure a minimum standard of living, which, after already receiving many displaced individuals, are critically stretched.

Unless existing services are strengthened and critical problems with current service provision are solved, a new influx of IDPs will increase pressure on already scarce resources. This, if not immediately addressed, may engender an increase of social tensions between incoming and existing populations, and/ or trigger further displacement as populations mobilise in search of food, water and social stability.

Particularly critical is the food and shelter situation, whose deterioration directly impacts people's well-being. While inhabitants can decrease the amount of food that they eat, sharing their rations with new arrivals will stretch what meagre resources they have to breaking point. Unless additional shelter materials or emergency shelter support is made available, the current lack of available shelter may force people to live in overcrowded spaces or start sleeping outside.

In order to ensure that new arrivals are able to successfully integrate themselves into the host community population, special food distributions and possibly shelter provision will need to be planned to ensure that there is enough food and shelter available for both the host community and newly arrived IDPs.

While markets were reported to be functional, other services such as health and education were reported to be deficient. Due to the closure of a previously working facility, the health care sector is severely overloaded and only able to respond to common, widespread diseases. The education sector has been reported as being unable to meet the demand for schooling and has no resources available to offer even the most basic education services for children. In the event of new returns, a focused intervention to enhance these two services is strongly encouraged.

In summary, findings from FGDs, key informant interviews and individual interviews highlight a generally welcoming environment albeit with an extremely fragile level of services that need be reinforced before any widespread relocations take place.