



# Tambura Displacement Brief

Tambura County, Western Equatoria State, South Sudan, November 2017

## Background

Following reports of returnee influx from the Central African Republic (CAR) to bordering areas in Western Equatoria State, REACH deployed as part of a multi-agency assessment to Tambura town, the border town of Source Yubu and surrounding areas to understand displacement patterns and access to services for newly arrived internally displaced person (IDP) and local communities. Tambura town was assessed on 8 November and Source Yubu was assessed on 9 November. REACH conducted five focus group discussions (FGDs) with newly arrived IDPs and members of the local community and two key informant interviews with Relief Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) officials. Eight settlements were furthermore assessed remotely through Key Informant (KI) interviews.<sup>1</sup>

## Population Movement and Displacement

The population of Tambura County has reportedly rapidly increased since the beginning of the year with reported influx of returnees from CAR as well as IDPs from neighbouring counties.

### Returns from CAR

Since June 2017, high numbers of South Sudanese refugees started to come back from Obo Camp in southeastern CAR. The RRC recorded 6,212 returnees (1,517 households (HHs)) in Source Yubu and 16,699 IDPs/returnees (8,360 HHs) in Tambura,<sup>2</sup> though no humanitarian organizations have been able to verify these numbers.

The main challenge along the traveling route reported by the returning population was hunger. While able-bodied individuals reportedly took between 5 to 9 days to travel from Obo Camp to Source Yubu and another 3 to 5 days to reach Tambura town, those traveling with young

children took much longer, often several weeks.

FGD participants reported that the returns were primarily motivated by a lack of food inside the camp, where food distributions stopped around June due to insecurity along the supply route.<sup>3</sup> Refugees in Obo Camp were reportedly not allowed to access land for cultivation and were therefore completely dependent on food assistance. Another reported reason for return was the fear of conflict, which is currently affecting CAR.

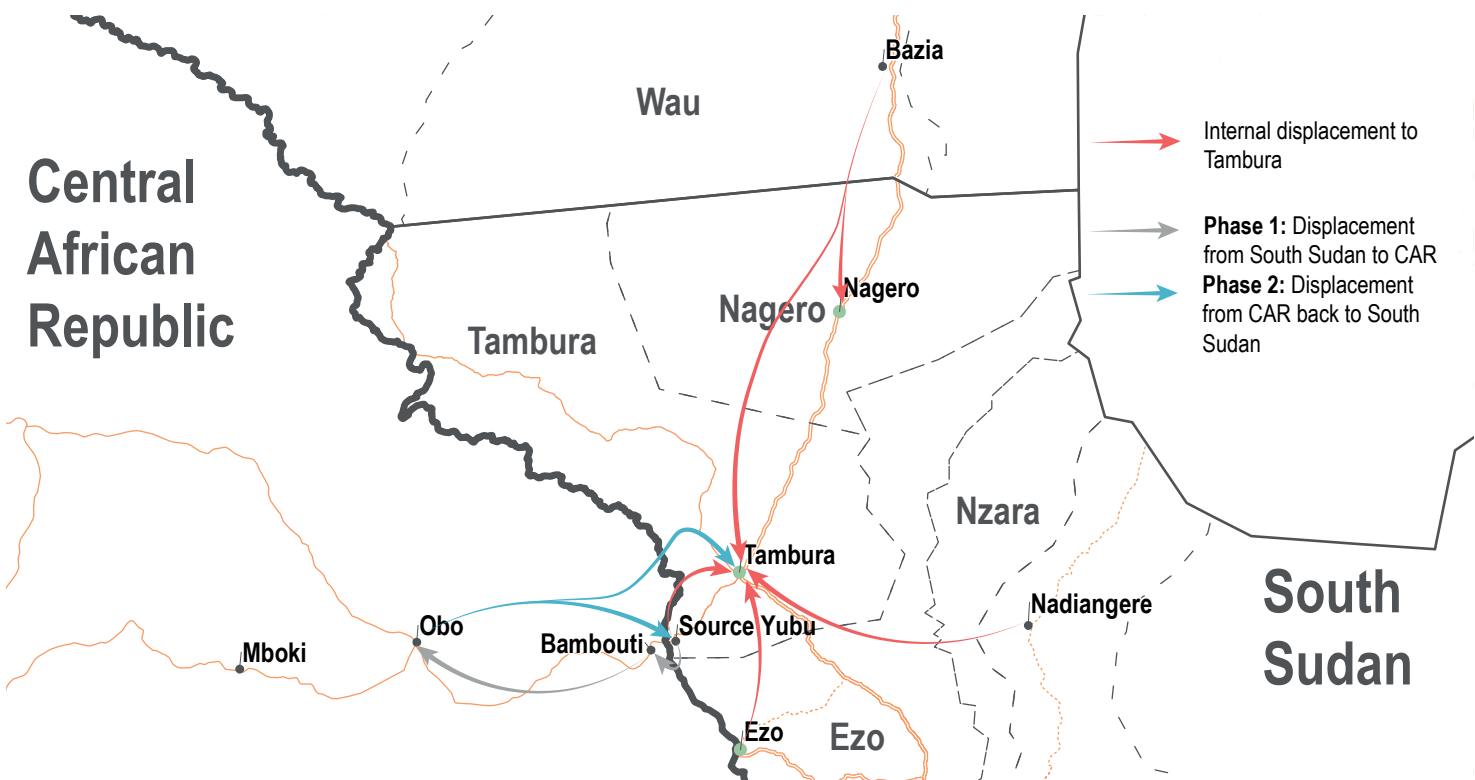
FGD participants reported that Obo Camp mainly hosted refugees from Source Yubu, which fled South Sudan following conflict which began in 2015. The most recent clashes in Source Yubu took place around November 2016 when most of the population was displaced to Bambouti, a town located approximately 5 km west of the border inside of CAR, from where they were transferred to Obo Camp earlier in the year. Other refugees in Obo Camp were reportedly from Ezo, Tambura and Nagero Counties, suggesting that small numbers of refugees might also be returning to those areas.

The vast majority of the returnees are originally from Source Yubu. Some of the returnees were able to settle again in their former communities in Source Yubu. A substantial proportion, however, reportedly found their houses destroyed or occupied by armed actors upon return and decided to move on towards Tambura town. Returnees/IDPs are scattered in and around Tambura town where they have settled with the local communities.

### Displacement from Bazia Road, Wau County

Between February and April 2017, heavy clashes displaced populations living along the Bazia road in Western Bahr el Ghazal towards Jur River County and Farajallah village, Wau County<sup>4</sup>. A smaller number

Map 1: Internal and cross boarder displacement towards Tambura County



# Tambura Rapid Assessment Brief

reportedly fled south to Nagero and Tambura Counties. According to recent reports, 700 IDPs have settled in Nagero town,<sup>5</sup> while the RRC in Tambura town recorded another 300 HHs which reportedly arrived between February and May 2017.

## Displacement from Nadiangare village, Yambio County

According to the RRC in Tambura town, approximately, 1,980 IDPs (325 HHs) have reportedly arrived between December 2016 and February 2017 from Nadiangare Village in Yambio County. Most of these IDPs have reportedly settled 10 km outside of Tambura town in Seneguse settlement (Mupoi Payam), after initial displacement from Nadiangare village due to heavy clashes.

## Displacement from Ezo town, Ezo County

Frequent clashes between 2015 and 2017 displaced people from Ezo town and outskirts towards Tambura town and surroundings, while others fled across the border to refugee camps in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). There are no official estimate numbers of IDPs from Ezo. However, FGD participants estimated around 2,000-3,000 individuals, some of whom have reportedly returned to Ezo town and surroundings.

## Refugees from Central African Republic

Reports shared by the Refugee Commission Affairs of 119 newly arrived refugees (22 HHs) from CAR could not be confirmed during the mission to Tambura. The RRC had reportedly no information about recent arrivals and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) could only verify nine newly arrived refugees from CAR. UNHCR had registered 812 refugees (250 HHs) that had fled intensive conflict between 2009 and 2012. Those refugees have settled within the Tambura community and were therefore reportedly not interested in relocation to refugee camps.

## Food Security and Livelihoods

The high influx of IDPs to Tambura has strained local resources including access to food, land for cultivation and clean water. Five out of the eight settlements assessed through the Area of Knowledge (AoK) methodology reported that there was not enough land for cultivation. This is consistent with FGD findings, which suggest that although the host community reportedly shared their land with IDPs, the acreages were often too small to cultivate enough to sustain the HHs. In addition to reduced access to land, localized dry spells and pests are reportedly affecting crop growth in Tambura and Source Yubu towns and outskirts. Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) reports confirm that although precipitation has been above average, localized dry spells have affected the south western part of the country.<sup>6</sup> FGD participants indicated that the harvest yields will likely not be enough to feed the population during the lean season.

With inadequate access to land for cultivation, most of the IDPs in Tambura rely on casual labour, such as collecting firewood or fetching water and selling it to shop and restaurant owners. Women explained that these activities expose them to sexual abuse and the risk of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infections.

## Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

FGD participants of local communities and IDPs in Tambura and Source Yubu towns expressed concerns over access to enough clean water during the upcoming dry season as small rivers, which are usually used for washing clothes, will dry up and boreholes become the only water source. Even during the wet season, the waiting time at boreholes had reportedly doubled due to the high influx of IDPs and returnees. The competition over limited water access is reported to have increased, leading to tensions within the community.

## Shelter

FGD participants reported that after food, shelter was the most reported need for IDPs and returnees in Tambura and Source Yubu. Most of the IDPs/returnees arrived in the midst of the cultivation season and therefore had no time to construct or reconstruct shelters. A lack of shelter construction tools was further mentioned as another main reason for a lack of shelter. Whilst some IDPs/returnees shared shelters with local communities, most of the arrivals were reportedly sleeping outside or constructing makeshift rakoobas<sup>7</sup> for the children to sleep in.

## Health and Education

Health centres are present in Source Yubu and in Tambura towns. However, in both places, there is reportedly no medicine available and staff have not been paid and lack incentive to treat patients. To cure common sicknesses, people go to private clinics and pharmacies. Similarly, public teachers are not incentivised to teach in schools due to a delay in salary payments. Absence of teachers is most common during the cultivation season, when many opt to support their families in planting and preparing land. In Tambura, the better off families reportedly send their children to private schools.

## Conclusion

The renewed influx of returnees from CAR and IDPs from Yambio, Ezo and Wau Counties to Tambura County throughout 2017 has strained local resources, including access to food, land for cultivation and clean drinking water. Although local communities have reportedly shared their land with IDP communities and both cultivated this year, dry spells and pests have reportedly affected yields, which will likely result in a rapid depletion of food stocks during the next lean season. Overall, food was the main reported need for IDPs followed by shelter material and construction tools as well as tools for cultivation. Members of the local community mainly expressed concerns about the strain on clean water sources, especially during the upcoming dry season when other sources dry out.

### Endnotes

1 For more information on the AoK methodology please refer to: REACH, Situation Overview: Greater Equatorias, October 2017.

2 RRC acknowledged that registration of returnees took place without verification of UNHCR ration cards from CAR.

3 Also supported by: UNHCR, CAR refugee response plan, August 2017.

4 REACH, Baggari Displacement and FSL brief, September 2017.

5 Radio Anisa, Over 700 IDPs from Wau sheltering in Tambura, Commissioner confirms, 23 November 2017.

6 FEWS NET, East Africa Seasonal Monitor, October and November 2017.

7 A rakooba is a tent, usually constructed out of wood and plastic sheets.