

Bagarri Displacement and Food Security and Livelihoods Brief

Wau County, Western Bahr el-Ghazal State, South Sudan, September 2017

Introduction

Following increasing reports of severe malnutrition and hunger-related deaths in the Greater Bagarri region in Wau County, REACH joined a World Food Program (WFP) Rapid Response Mission team, United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) for two general food distributions (GFDs) in Mboro and Faragullah. The objective was to conduct focus group discussions (FGDs), Key Informant (KI) interviews, and general observation to assist with the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification of the sub-population located in the Greater Bagarri region, south west of Wau Town. The assessment was conducted from September 19 to 24 and consisted of four FGDs with 27 participants, four KI interviews, continuous interaction with community members, and general observation of the surrounding areas by foot and car.

Population Movement and Displacement

FGD participants identified two periods of large displacement in Wau County due to insecurity affecting the Greater Bagarri area. The first in June 2016 forced many households (HHs) in the Greater Bagarri area to move into the bush, before eventually returning a few months later. The most recent surge of conflict in April 2017 caused displacement from three general areas, from Raja road, the eastern portion of the Greater Bagarri region, and along Bazia road. Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) from these areas have been displaced towards Wau Town, Jur River, and western Bagarri (map 1). The majority of those displaced into the western part of Greater Bagarri concentrated near Mboro, Ngisa and Farajallah. Most IDPs arrived with no provisions, reportedly due to the looting of their settlements by armed actors. KIs reported that because of perceived security and proximity to aid and

markets in Wau Town, IDPs relocated to western Bagarri instead of travelling further west or south where there are likely more resources and land for cultivation. However, since April, continued insecurity on the routes from western Bagarri to Wau Town have severely reduced access to both aid and markets.

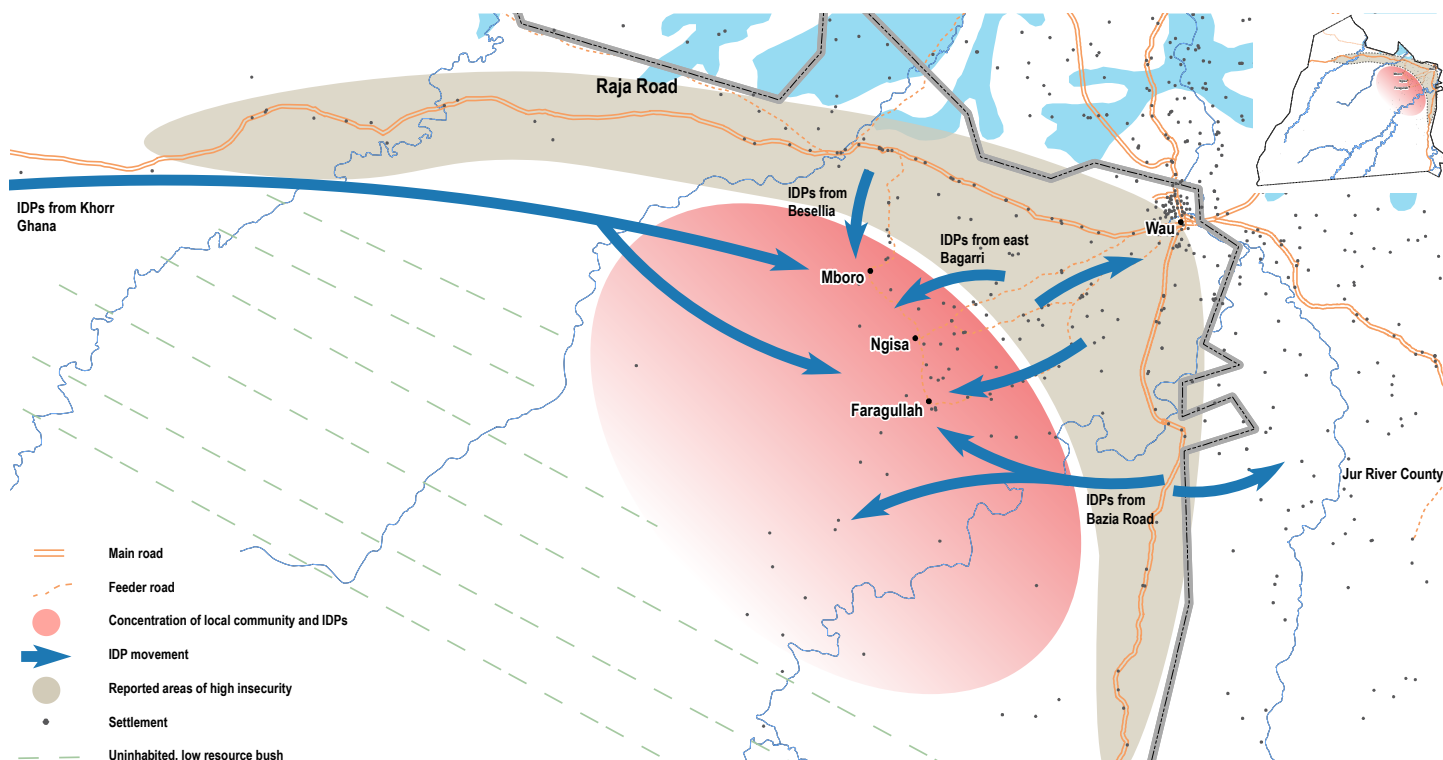
Displacement from the southwest of Wau Town

In April 2017, there was a surge of insecurity in the areas southwest of Wau and Bagarri, with reports of armed actors looting and destroying local resources. As a result, there was mass displacement within the area, and the majority of IDPs moved into settlements perceived to be safe.¹ According to FGD participants, an estimated 3,500 IDPs from east Bagarri were displaced towards Mboro and Faragullah, often only a few kilometres away from their previous location, where they integrated with local communities. The sharp influx of IDPs and severe reduction in market access led to a rapid depletion of availability and access to food.

Displacement along Raja road

The second major displacement was along Raja road, north and west of Bagarri. The recent conflict has forced an estimated 2,500 IDPs to travel from Raja road to Western Bagarri. FGDs reported two major groups of IDPs arriving in the recent months, including approximately 1,500 from Khorh Ghana and 1,000 from Besellia. According to FGD participants, IDPs from Khorh Ghana, a settlement located 90km west of Wau Town, travelled over seven days to reach Mboro, with reported deaths along the route due to hunger and disease. According to KIs, IDPs from Khorh Ghana were initially heading to Wau, however, due to insecurity they were unable to move further east. As a result, IDPs from Khorh Ghana were living with local communities and in the bush near Mboro and Farajallah. Furthermore, IDPs from Besellia

Map 1: Displacement trends in Greater Bagarri in April 2017



Bagarri Displacement and Food Security and Livelihoods Brief

Table 1: Estimated IDP numbers by IDP origin

Khorr Ghana	1,500	Eastern Bagarri	3,500
Besellia	1,000	Bazia road	1,000

were also reported to be scattered throughout Mboro and Farajallah with some living with the local community and others still hiding in the bush, making it difficult for local authorities to provide an exact number of IDPs in the area.

Displacement along Bazia road

Finally, KIs also reported IDPs arriving from settlements located along Bazia road. IDPs from these areas are reported to have moved both east towards Jur River and west towards Farajallah, approximately at a day walk. According to FGD participants, an estimated 1,000 IDPs are living throughout Farajallah, with no reported IDPs from Bazia road residing in Mboro.

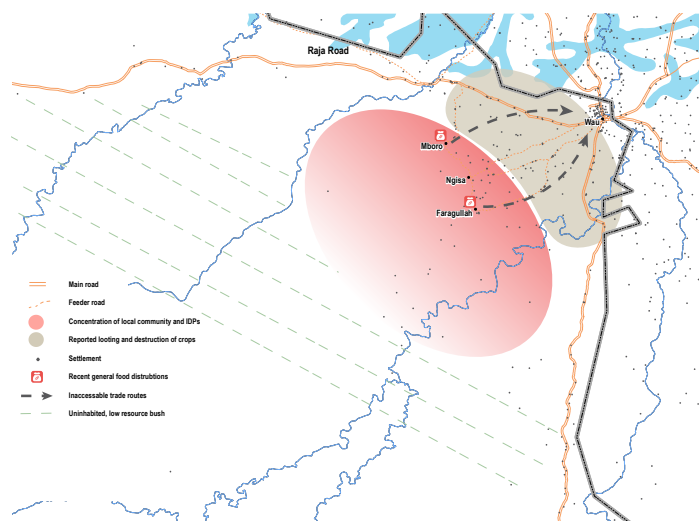
Food Security and Livelihoods

Due to the sharp influx of IDPs, most of whom did not bring food, seeds, tools or non-food items, there has been a rapid depletion of local resources in western Bagarri, particularly in Mboro. As a result of conflict, movement is restricted and key markets, such as Wau Town, are too dangerous to access, forcing to rely solely on local production to feed both the host community and IDPs. The heightened level of insecurity also limits HHs' ability to access land and assets, even if land is in close proximity. According to KIs, IDPs in Mboro and Faragullah can access some resources via social networks and local markets, although access is insufficient to support large groups of IDPs.

As a result, FGD participants emphasised a severe decline in the level of food availability and access, leaving most HHs consuming one meal per day, primarily made of ground nuts and tomatoes. Consequently, the assessed areas are also dependent on gathering wild foods, including yams and cassava leaves, along with consuming their harvest before it is fully matured to supplement the reduced availability of food.

The north-western part of Bagarri, including Mboro and surrounding settlements, appears to be the most affected by the influx of IDPs and severely limited market access. Since April, HHs in this area have had minimal access to aid and have quickly depleted any food stocks available. According to FGD participants, most HHs have no access to cultivation, and the majority of planted crops have been looted or destroyed by armed actors. This year cultivation was practised by an estimated 70% of the population, however, KIs reported that most

Map 2: Trade routes and location of GFDs



plots have been destroyed by fighting and the remaining plots are too small to yield enough food to last until the upcoming lean season. As a result, HHs rely heavily on wild foods to meet consumption gaps. KIs emphasised that wild food sources were depleting, forcing HHs to travel further distances, often into insecure areas, to find adequate resources.

As a result, the level of malnutrition is well above World Health Organization's threshold⁵, reflecting the low quantity and poor quality of food consumed by HHs. Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) data gathered by UNICEF during the assessment reflect the severe level of malnutrition caused by a lack of food in Mboro. Overall, 970 children from the age 6 months to 59 months were screened from the Mboro area, and initial data suggest a proxy GAM rate of 32%, indicative of severe food consumption gaps.

According to KIs, a majority of HHs have depleted their available food sources and are unable to access food elsewhere. In the coming months, it is likely the population will experience a slight increase in food availability. however, with continued restrictions on movement, minimal access to markets and humanitarian assistance, and a high concentration of people in a single area, it is likely that food insecurity will severely increase in the medium to long run.

Table 2: Screen nutrition rates for children 6-59 months²

Location	Proxy SAM ³	Proxy GAM ⁴	Number of odema cases
Mboro	11.9%	32.6%	2
Farajallah	8.3%	25.2%	11

Endnotes

1 OCHA South Sudan: Humanitarian Bulletin 30 2016. CCCM: Wau Displacement Response Update 25 April 2017.

2 Nutrition rates based on screening of children by UNICEF and WFP teams on September 20 - 21, 2017.

3 Severe Acute Malnutrition.

4 Global Acute Malnutrition.