

Research Terms of Reference

Emergency Assessment Wau IDPs

SSD2507

South Sudan

November 2025

Final Version

REACH Informing
more effective
humanitarian action

1. Executive Summary

Country of intervention	South Sudan					
Type of Emergency	<input type="checkbox"/>	Natural hazard	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Conflict	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify)
Type of Crisis	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sudden onset	<input type="checkbox"/>	Slow onset	<input type="checkbox"/>	Protracted
Mandating Body/ Agency	FCDO					
IMPACT Project Code	32GBK					
Overall Research Timeframe	Oct 27 – Dec 17, 2025					
Research Timeframe	1. Pilot/ training: NA		6. Preliminary presentation: N/A			
	2. Start collect data: 07/11/2025		7. Outputs sent for validation: 9/12/2025			
	3. Data collected: 17/11/2025		8. Outputs published: 17/12/2025			
	4. Data analysed: 20/11/2025		9. Final presentation: TBD			
	5. Data sent for validation: 20/11/2025					
Number of assessments	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single assessment (one cycle)				
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Multi assessment (more than one cycle)				
Humanitarian milestones	Milestone		Deadline (can be tentative)			
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Donor plan/strategy	ASAP			
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Inter-cluster plan/strategy	ASAP			
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Cluster plan/strategy	ASAP			
	<input type="checkbox"/>	NGO platform plan/strategy	N/A			
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Specify):	N/A			
Audience Type & Dissemination	Audience type		Dissemination			
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Strategic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> General Product Mailing (e.g. mail to NGO consortium; HCT participants; Donors) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cluster Mailing (Education, Shelter and WASH) to offer presentation of findings at next cluster meeting <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Presentation of findings (e.g. at HCT meeting; Cluster meeting) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Website Dissemination (Relief Web & REACH Resource Centre) <input type="checkbox"/> In-person dissemination to			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Programmatic					
<input type="checkbox"/>	Operational					
<input type="checkbox"/>	[Other, Specify]					

Stakeholder mapping	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
General Objective	To provide humanitarian actors with information and analysis on the Nagero County– Wau County displacement situation, including an overview of the humanitarian situation in Nagero County, to affect a more informed humanitarian response and enable better prepared response planning, and to enable evidence-based advocacy on behalf of affected populations.	
Specific Objective(s)	<p>Specific objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline the current humanitarian situation in areas of departure, including priority needs, and drivers of those needs. • Outline movement dynamics - including movement intentions, push and pull factors, and restricted mobility - of IDPs from Nagero • Understand how displacement has affected priority needs of IDPs in areas of settlement in Wau County • Identify perceived impact of the population influx on the needs of the host community in areas of settlement in Wau County • Assess the existing formal and communal support mechanisms in place to address protection issues in areas of settlement in Wau • Assess how the humanitarian situation in IDPs’ areas of settlement in Wau County may evolve over the next 3 months – based on intention movements, stakeholder’s perspectives and contextual knowledge – and outline possible implications for impacted population’s basic needs and wellbeing. 	
Research Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the current humanitarian situation in areas of departure? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What were the main challenges communities’ were facing in their areas of departure? b. What are the drivers of these needs? 2. What are the current population movement dynamics between Nagero County and Wau County? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What are the push and pull factors for migrating populations? b. What are the experiences of IDPs during transit in terms of means of travel, movement barriers and any other challenges? c. Which households or individuals have been affected most by potential movement barriers? And how has this impacted them? d. What are populations’ movement intentions over the coming 3-month period, and what factors influence these decisions? 3. What are IDPs’ priority needs and how have these been impacted by recent displacement? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What are main challenges IDPs are facing in their area of settlement in Wau County? b. How have food sources changed as a result of displacement? c. How has access to livelihoods changed as a result of displacement? d. How has access to services changed as a result of displacement? 	

	<p>4. How do host community members in Wau County perceive their needs to have been impacted by the influx of IDPs into their areas?</p> <p>5. What formal and communal support mechanisms are in place to address protection issues in areas of settlement in Wau?</p> <p>a. Are IDPs and host community members aware of such mechanisms?</p> <p>6. How is the humanitarian situation in IDP settlement areas in Wau County likely to evolve over the subsequent 3 month period?</p> <p>a. What are the most important risk factors to monitor in the subsequent 3-month period?</p>			
Geographic Coverage	Data collection will take place in Wau County, Western Bahr el Ghazal State, South Sudan. Data collection will be carried out in locations where new arrivals (IDPs) are residing. The main focus will be Bazia, an area in the south of Wau County, where reportedly a large group of IDPs is residing. Additionally, data will potentially be collected in and around Wau town, if there are areas where IDPs from Nagero are residing. The research team will confirm this with local authorities and partners on the ground on the first day of data collection.			
Secondary data sources	To contextualize this assessment’s findings, the team will draw from a variety of secondary data sources. For a full list, see section 4.3. Main data sources will be IPC data, FSNMS data, IOM displacement tracking data, and others.			
Population(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	IDPs in camp	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	IDPs in informal sites
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	IDPs in host communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	IDPs [Other, Specify]
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Refugees in camp	<input type="checkbox"/>	Refugees in informal sites
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Refugees in host communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	Refugees [Other, Specify]
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Host communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	Returnees (in any setting)
Stratification: n/a	<input type="checkbox"/>	Geographical #: ___ Population size per strata is known? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Group #: Population size per strata is known? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Data collection tool(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Structured (Quantitative)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Semi-structured (Qualitative)
	Sampling method		Data collection method	
Semi-structured data collection tool (s) #1 <i>Scoping FGDs with IDP leaders/elders</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Purposive <input type="checkbox"/> Snowballing <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify]		<input type="checkbox"/> Key informant interview <input type="checkbox"/> Individual interview <input type="checkbox"/> Focus group discussion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scoping Focus Group Discussion (Target: 2)	
Target level of precision	NA – Qualitative data collection		NA – Qualitative data collection	
Disaggregation by gender and age	Gender		Age	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
Semi-structured data collection tool (s) #2 <i>FGD with IDPs – Needs</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Purposive <input type="checkbox"/> Snowballing <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify]		<input type="checkbox"/> Key informant interview <input type="checkbox"/> Individual interview <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Focus group discussion (Target: 6-8) <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify]	
Target level of precision	NA – Qualitative data collection		NA – Qualitative data collection	
	Gender		Age	

Disaggregation by gender and age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes: 4 FGDs with women, 4 FGDs with men	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes: 4 FGDs with young adults (18-29 years) and 4 FGDs with adults (30+ years)
	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Semi-structured data collection tool (s) #3 <i>FGD with IDPs – Displacement</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Purposive <input type="checkbox"/> Snowballing <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify]	<input type="checkbox"/> Key informant interview <input type="checkbox"/> Individual interview <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Focus group discussion (Target: 6-8) <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify]
Target level of precision	NA – Qualitative data collection	NA – Qualitative data collection
Disaggregation by gender and age	Gender	Age
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes: 4 FGDs with women, 4 FGDs with men	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes: 4 FGDs with young adults (18-29 years) and 4 FGDs with adults (30+ years)
	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Semi-structured data collection tool (s) #4 <i>FGD with Host Community</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Purposive <input type="checkbox"/> Snowballing <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify]	<input type="checkbox"/> Key informant interview <input type="checkbox"/> Individual interview <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Focus group discussion (Target: 2) <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify]
Target level of precision	NA – Qualitative data collection	NA – Qualitative data collection
Disaggregation by gender and age	Gender	Age
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes: 1 FGD with women, 1 FGD with men	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Semi-structured data collection tool (s) #5 <i>Individual Interviews with IDPs</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Purposive <input type="checkbox"/> Snowballing <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify]	<input type="checkbox"/> Key informant interview <input type="checkbox"/> Individual interview <input type="checkbox"/> Focus group discussion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Individual Interview (Target: 10)
Target level of precision	NA – Qualitative data collection	NA – Qualitative data collection
Disaggregation by gender and age	Gender	Age
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes: 5 IIs with women, 5 IIs with men	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Semi-structured data collection tool (s) #6 <i>KII with authorities</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Purposive <input type="checkbox"/> Snowballing <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify]	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Key informant interview (Target 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Individual interview <input type="checkbox"/> Focus group discussion <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify]
Target level of precision	NA – Qualitative data collection	NA – Qualitative data collection
Disaggregation by gender and age	Gender	Age
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Semi-structured data collection tool (s) # 7 <i>KIIs with humanitarians</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Purposive <input type="checkbox"/> Snowballing <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify]	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Key informant interview (Target 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Individual interview <input type="checkbox"/> Focus group discussion <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify]
Target level of precision	NA – Qualitative data collection	NA – Qualitative data collection
Disaggregation by gender and age	Gender	Age
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes

	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Semi-structured data collection tool (s) # 8 <i>KII with conflict analysts</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Purposive <input type="checkbox"/> Snowballing <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify]	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Key informant interview (Target 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Individual interview <input type="checkbox"/> Focus group discussion <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify]	
Target level of precision	NA – Qualitative data collection	NA – Qualitative data collection	
Disaggregation by gender and age	Gender	Age	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
Data management platform(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IMPACT	<input type="checkbox"/> UNHCR	
	<input type="checkbox"/> [Other, specify]		
Expected output type(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Situation overview: #1	<input type="checkbox"/> Report	<input type="checkbox"/> Profile
	<input type="checkbox"/> Preliminary findings	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Presentation (Final): TBD	<input type="checkbox"/> Factsheet
	<input type="checkbox"/> Interactive dashboard	<input type="checkbox"/> Webmap	<input type="checkbox"/> Map
Access	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Public (available on REACH resource centre and other humanitarian platforms)	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Restricted (bilateral dissemination only upon agreed dissemination list, no publication on REACH or other platforms) – due to the sensitivity of some topics (protection, conflict), part of the output may be disseminated bilaterally. A decision will be made after data collection concluded, when the research team can assess the sensitivity of the data analyses. The research team will make this decision in collaboration with REACH country coordination and relevant partners (e.g. South Sudan Protection Cluster).	
Visibility	REACH		
	Donor: FCDO		
	Coordination Framework: NA		
	Partners: NA		

1.1 List of acronyms

AFI	Acute Food Insecurity
SAO	Senior Assessment Officer
CR	Country Representative
DSAG	Data Saturation and Analysis Grid
ERRM	Emergency Rapid Response Mechanism
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
FO	Field Officer
FSNMS	Food Security and Nutrition Monitoring
II	Individual Interview
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
KII	Key Informant Interviews
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PII	Personally Identifiable Information
RRC	Relief and Rehabilitation Committee
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
UN	United Nations
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme

2. Rationale

1.2 Background

South Sudan’s Western Equatoria State has experienced a marked escalation in violence in 2025 – with a significant increase in the number of armed clashes and armed attacks across several counties. Among these, Nagero County stands out as one of the most severely affected, with the number of incidents of violence in 2025 far exceeding the combined total from the previous three years.¹ In January 2025, several incidents of armed clashes were reported between armed forces in Nagero Payam, according to a conflict monitoring organisation. Hostilities between armed groups continued into early February, including one assault targeting civilians along Tambura-Nagero road. While reported incidents in Nagero County subsided from March to August 2025, violence resumed in late September, with more frequent incidents compared to early 2025, according to the same conflict monitoring organisation. Several armed clashes, which included exchange of heavy gunfire, caused panic among civilians according to local media reports² – prompting many, including humanitarian workers, to flee into nearby bushes for safety.³ In addition to armed confrontations, reports from 2025 also include one abduction and the looting of an INGO-supported health facility in the county.⁴ The 2025 Food Security and Nutrition Monitoring Survey (FSNMS) further underscores the impact of insecurity, identifying it as the most commonly reported challenge among households in Nagero, affecting 57% of respondents.⁵

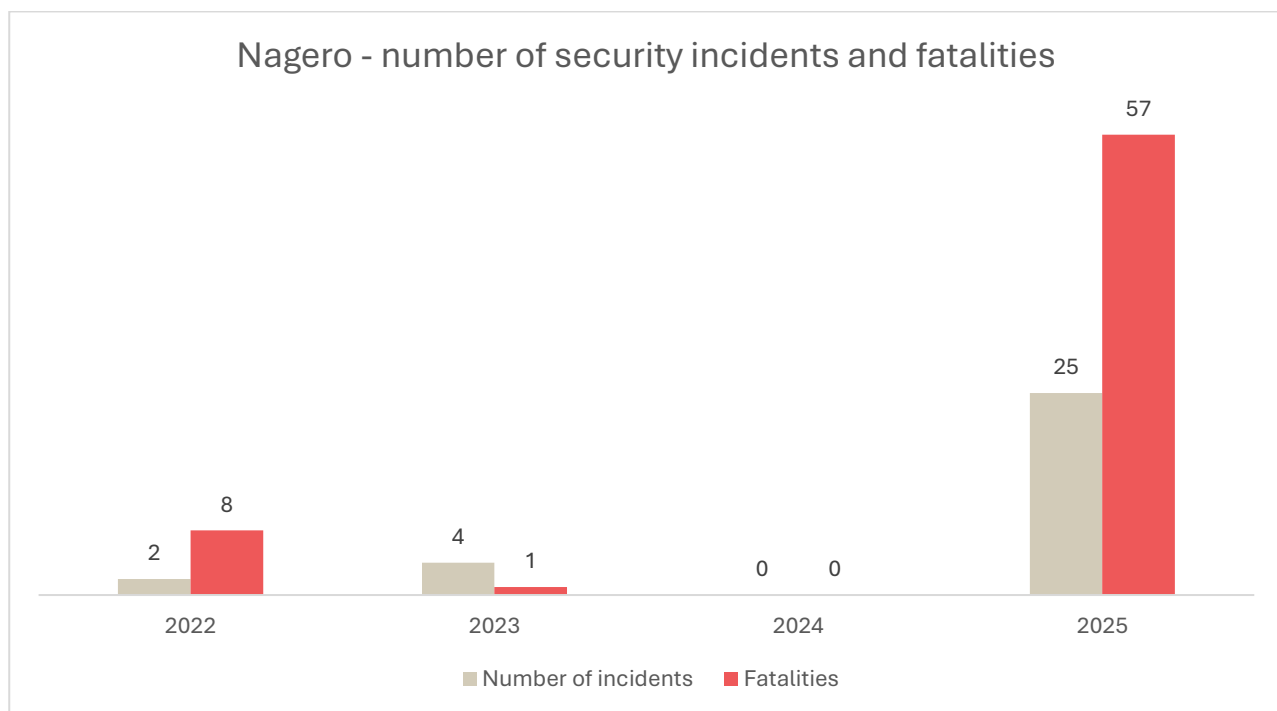


Figure 1 Number of Security Incidents in Nagero County over the years (Source: ACLED, 2025)

Increase in violence has resulted in massive displacement, although exact numbers and locations are still unclear. According to an OCHA briefing at the national ICCG meeting on 7 October 2025, an estimated 117,000 people were displaced from five counties in Western Equatoria State (Nagero, Tambura, Ezo, Mundri East, Ibba) due to conflict and security concerns. Within this, an estimated 20,941 people from Nagero County (out of a total population of 61,561) had reportedly been displaced by early October, though these figures remained unconfirmed.

¹ According to data from a conflict monitoring organisation, and according to ACLED (2025).

² The South Sudan Herald. (2025, October 28). Clashes in Nagero County, South Sudan, Displace Families and Spur Aid Appeal. <https://southsudanherald.com/>. Link; Waure, E. (2025, October 8). Renewed Violence Empties Nagero Town in Western Equatoria. *The Dawn Newspaper*. [Link](#).

³ According to a conflict monitoring organisation

⁴ According to a conflict monitoring organisation

⁵ WFP, & FAO. (2025). *Food Security and Nutrition Monitoring System (FSNMS)* [Dataset].

Reports from several organisations and authorities indicate that a considerable proportion of Nagero’s displaced populations have moved northwards, along the Wau-Tambura road, and have crossed into Wau County (Western Bahr el Ghazal State). Data from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) indicates that, as of 12 October, Kpaile Payam (in the South of Wau County) was hosting over 9,000 displaced individuals from Nagero.⁶ According to IOM, these internally displaced persons (IDPs) were either integrated into the host community – primarily in Bazia West and East – or settled in two informal sites: St. Peter Cleveland Church in Bazia and a location known as Nakpataguru. On 22 October, the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) reported that 7,258 households (approximately 43,548 individuals) from Nagero had relocated to Bazia, with 190 households reaching Wau Town. Later in October, the RRC revised its estimates, reporting that 2,020 households (18,019 individuals) were residing within the church compound in Bazia.

Box 1: background on food security and livelihoods in Nagero County

Food Security and Livelihoods in Nagero County prior to 2025 violence

Nagero County falls within the western plains groundnuts, sesame and sorghum livelihoods zone. Livelihoods in this zone are mostly based on subsistence rain-fed agriculture, supplemented by forest products and seasonal fishing in shallow rivers and animal sales (poultry, goats and sheep). Indeed, 2025 Food Security and Nutrition Monitoring System (FSNMS) data collection shows agriculture is commonly practiced in Nagero County: 98% of households had access to land for cultivation (almost exclusively individually owned) and 97% of households in the county planned to plant crops in 2025. The most commonly planted crops are groundnuts and sorghum, and, to a lesser extent, sesame. Other livelihood activities such as brewing alcohol and casual labour in the agricultural sector are also common. The area has forests that can be used to export timber, and the sale of timber and forest products is the main source of income for 8% of households according to the 2025 FSNMS. In addition to cultivation, hunting and livestock are also important food sources for households in Nagero County – with 71% of households owning livestock, as per 2025 FSNMS.

Nagero borders the Bahr el-Ghazal region where cattle keeping is common. Thus, seasonal livestock migrations see pastoralists from neighboring Wau County migrate south through Nagero during the dry season, in search of grazing grounds and water sources.

Sources: CSRF South Sudan. (2020, March 15). *Nagero County*. [Link](#); FEWS NET. (2018). *Livelihoods Zone Map and Descriptions for the Republic of South Sudan*. FEWS NET; WFP, & FAO. (2025). *Food Security and Nutrition Monitoring System (FSNMS)* [Dataset].

The recent displacement of communities from Nagero County is likely to have had a substantial impact on household livelihoods and food security, and vulnerability is potentially exacerbated by protection-related risks and concerns. Given that most households in Nagero County rely on subsistence agriculture, supplemented by forest products and livestock products or sales, the disruption caused by displacement has likely undermined access to key food sources and income-generating activities. Displacement occurred prior to the harvest of several staple crops – including sorghum, cassava, cowpeas, pumpkin, and sweet potatoes⁷ – raising concerns about the loss of anticipated food stocks. For crops harvested earlier in the year, such as groundnuts and sesame, it remains unclear whether households were able to carry any reserves with them. Similarly, the extent to which households were able to relocate with their livestock – an important source of both food and income – is unknown. These factors suggest that displaced households may now face limited access to both food and financial resources needed to purchase food. Furthermore, unlike in some other counties in South Sudan where displacement has occurred frequently – often in response to violence or seasonal flooding – Nagero County has no strong history of displacement. For many affected households, this may be the first time they have been forced to flee their homes and communities. This lack of prior experience with displacement may increase vulnerability and reduces the capacity of households to adapt to their new circumstances. Lastly, extreme levels of violence in Nagero County have likely resulted in severe protection risks and concerns for local populations.

⁶ Internal data from IOM, on file with REACH

⁷ FEWS NET. (2018). *Livelihoods Zone Map and Descriptions for the Republic of South Sudan*. FEWS NET.

1.3 Information gaps

Little is known about the humanitarian situation in Nagero County, particularly around protection risks and concerns, and the impact the violence has had on local populations. At the national ICCG meeting on 7 October 2025, OCHA recognised that limited information has been available on the situation in Western Equatoria State. According to the agency, insecurity and limited access, limited partner presence, weak information sharing and coordination, limited resources, and a lack of communication channels have prevented scaling up the response. As of the end of October, 2025, there have been no assessments conducted in Nagero County on the impacts of recent violence and displacement of local populations.

Secondly, the latest bouts of violence in Nagero County happened post-IPC analysis, meaning the county is potentially under-classified in the IPC. The significant bulk of violence happened from late September, after FSNMS data collection was concluded – which means that the displacement of these communities, and the potentially significant effect this has had on their food security and livelihoods, has not been captured in the IPS 2025 analysis. This means it is likely the current classification for Nagero County may be an under-representation of the actual severity of the situation in the county.

Box 2: Conclusions from latest IPC analysis (September 2025) in Nagero County

Nagero County classified as IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) from September – November 2025, with expected improvement in the food security situation from December onwards.

The latest IPC analysis, conducted in September 2025, classified Nagero County to be in IPC Phase 3 (crisis) during the current analysis period (September to November 2025). Improvements in food availability and access were expected from October due to the harvest of legumes, sesame, vegetables, greens, and tubers, sourced from both own production and markets. According to the analysis, these developments are likely to improve dietary diversity and food consumption while helping stabilize or reduce market prices, despite ongoing economic instability and exchange rate fluctuations. At the time of the analysis, local insecurity – particularly due to intercommunal violence between the Azande and Balanda in areas bordering Western Bahr el Ghazal – was disrupting trade routes between Tambura and Nagero, affecting market supplies in some locations. Overall, analysts concluded that Nagero County was classified as IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) during the current analysis period (September to November 2025), with parts of the population showing signs of improvement and potentially transitioning toward Phase 2 (Stressed) as the harvest continues – when households are supported through food availability from own production and market stocks, while having adequate access to livestock products to supplement diets.

Sources: add link to IPC report; FEWS NET. (2024). South Sudan Seasonal Calendar. [Link](#).

1.4 Intended impact

Given these risks, and the information gaps associated with a rapidly developing context, REACH plans to conduct primary data collection in Wau County in November 2025. The research questions laid out in these Terms of Reference are built around information gaps and needs identified by humanitarian actors and coordination bodies, focusing on population movement dynamics, IDP perspectives on the humanitarian situation in Nagero County, including protection risks and concerns, and how IDP needs and livelihoods have changed as a result of displacement. Addressing these information gaps will help provide humanitarian, development and governmental actors with a better understanding of this complex and rapidly evolving context. Thereby, the findings will support partners in developing more inclusive, evidence-based response planning. Additionally, the findings may also support partners' fundraising efforts at a global or national level.

Preliminary findings may be shared during data collection with the REACH senior management team for further bilateral dissemination to partners and coordination bodies on an ad-hoc basis, particularly potential findings related to risks such as excess mortality, protection concerns, and anticipated arrivals and needs. Following data collection, a brief will be written and shared with REACH's full product dissemination list. Findings

will also be shared with INGOs including ACTED Emergency Response Unit and the Emergency Rapid Response Mechanism (ERRM) Consortium to inform emergency response programming.

3. Methodology

1.1 Methodology overview

A qualitative approach was chosen for two reasons. First, the research questions are primarily descriptive and relational in nature. Rather than measure the severity of prevalence of needs, they aim to better understand primary humanitarian needs and their underlying drivers, population movement dynamics, humanitarian service gaps and challenges in service delivery, and community and key informant perspectives on ongoing context changes and prospects for the subsequent 3 month period. Second, considering the rapidly evolving context, there is a need to inform partners about the situation on a relatively short timeline. As quantitative methods require a larger sample, a larger team of data collectors, a longer data collection period in order to train data collectors, and a higher level of access to more remote areas to ensure findings are representative, these methods are not feasible given the aim and intended impact of the assessment.

The assessment will make use of both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data collection will consist of three qualitative components: Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), Individual Interviews (IIs), Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). FGDs will be held with two distinct population groups: new arrivals from Nagero County, “IDPs”, who arrived in Wau County since August 2025, and members of the “host community” (individuals who have not recently been displaced). IIs will also be held with IDPs. On the first day of data collection, two ‘scoping’ FGDs with IDP community leaders will be conducted – aiming to provide a stronger understanding of the context of the assessment area. This includes recent events and ongoing dynamics which may have affected humanitarian conditions, access to food, population movement, and service provision. KIIs will be held with humanitarian service providers, local authorities, and conflict analysts.

Secondary data will be used to triangulate and supplement findings. In particular, secondary quantitative data from recent data collection and analyses efforts (incl. FSNMS, IPC, population estimates, village assessments, etc.) will be used, in order to present a comprehensive picture of the current humanitarian situation in Wau County.

1.2 Population of interest

Geographical coverage: data collection will take place in Wau County, Western Bahr el Ghazal State, South Sudan. Data collection will be mainly carried out in Bazia, an area in the south of Wau County along Wau – Tambura road, and, potentially, in and around Wau Town. While the research team has a rough understanding of where target populations are residing in Wau County, based on initial conversations with local authorities and humanitarian partners, the context remains highly fluid and such locations may change between the time of writing and data collection. For the final selection of data collection locations, field teams will conduct informal population mapping exercise with the Relief and Rehabilitation Committee (RRC), UN agencies and NGOs upon arrival at the assessment location.

Population groups assessed: the main population of interest for this assessment are populations from Nagero County who have been displaced into Wau County since August 2025, or “IDPs”, as well as persons who were living in Wau County before this outbreak of violence, or “host communities”.

Unit of measurement: in the FGDs, participants will be asked to answer questions on conditions and trends in the broader population group assessed. In the IIs, participants will be asked to answer questions based on their own experience. In the KIIs, interviewees will be asked to answer questions based on their expertise and experience working in the humanitarian or public sector in Wau County.

1.3 Secondary data review

The table below presents an overview of secondary data to be consulted during the research design phase, as well as for subsequent analysis/reporting. This is a summary of most important reports / datasets / literature used for the assessment. However, more secondary data sources will be used throughout each phase of the assessment.

Table 1 Key secondary data sources used for the assessment (non-exclusive list)

Secondary source	Purpose of source
IPC analysis 2025 FSMNS 2025 ISNA 2024 Wau Village Survey Assessment 2023	Secondary data sources to assess humanitarian situation in Wau (pre IDP influx) across different sectors, with a focus on food, health, nutrition and WASH.
IOM event tracking dataset IOM flow monitoring registry Wau Village Survey Assessment 2023	Background on displacement events, to be used in rationale for assessment and in final output.
REACH Tambura Rapid Assessment South Sudan Humanitarian Snapshot September 2025 ERRM RNA data	If the RNA conducts a RNA in Wau County in November 2025, the research team will request primary data to triangulate findings from this assesment.

1.4 Primary Data Collection

Primary data collection will take place over 2 weeks, between November 6-18, 2025. Data collection will take place in Wau County – particularly in Wau town and Bazia.

FGD and II participants will be sampled purposively. Heads of households will be targeted for FGDs, or, failing that, adults with a firm understanding of the humanitarian situation in each community. Locally-hired community mobilisers will assist the Senior Assessment Officer (SAO) in identifying individuals willing to meet in person to contribute to the study. For the IIs and FGDs, individuals are selected semi-randomly, based on their displacement status, age and gender. All FGDs will be conducted separately with men and women to reflect standard practice to enable an open environment for discussion, and groups will be 6-8 individuals in size. FGDs with IDPs will also be conducted seperately for young adults (18-29 years of age) and adults (30 years and above). The composition of the host community FGDs should aim to reflect wider community dynamics, including age, socio-economic status, and other relevant factors. For the Scoping Focus Group discussions (sFGDs), a similar approach will be taken in order to identify IDP community leaders/elders willing to meet in person to contribute to the study.

Key informants will be sampled purposively as well. Experts from humanitarian agencies in Wau will be purposively selected based on their experience with and expertise of the humanitarian situation in the county, in addition to topics such as population movement and conflict dynamics. Similarly, staff from local authorities – in particular, the Relief and Rehabilitation Committee – will also be purposively selected. The team also aims to interview at least one conflict analyst/expert with a strong background on the historical and geopolitical situation in South Sudan and, preferably, Western Equatoria/Nagero County.

Table 2 Data Collection Methods

Method	Target Sample Size	Tool	Unit of measurement
KIIs	Total minimum target of interviews: 6	Three different KII tools:	Community
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGOs/INGOs in Wau: 2 • UN agencies in Wau: 2 • Relief and Rehabilitation Committee: 1 • Conflict analysts/experts: 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humanitarian agencies tool • Local authorities tool • Conflict dynamics tool 	
IIs	Total minimum target of interviews: 10	One II tool	Individual
Scoping FGDs	Total minimum target of Scoping FGDs: 2	One Scoping FGD tool	Community
FGDs	Total minimum target of FGDs: 18	Three different FGD tools:	Individual/ Community
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IDP Women Youth: 4 • IDP Women Elders: 4 • IDP Men Youth: 4 • IDP Men Elders: 4 • Host Community Men: 1 • Host Community Women: 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FGD - IDPs – Needs • FGD – IDPs - Displacement • FGD - Host community 	

Data collection field teams

Data will be collected by a team of experienced REACH staff. The team will comprise one REACH SAO and one REACH Field Officer (FO). Additionally, the team will be supported by one field supervisor, two translators and two community mobilisers – all to be hired in Wau County.

Several trainings will be conducted prior to data collection exercises. First, the FO will receive a half-day in-person training in Juba from the SAO – aiming to provide i) a deep-dive on the assessment’s objectives; ii) create a thorough and practical understanding of the sampling strategy and tools; and iii) provide a refresher training on good practices for qualitative data collection and ethical considerations. Second, all locally-hired staff will receive a half-day training in Wau – aiming to provide a robust understanding of the assessment’s objectives and data collection tools, including their translation into the local language.

Data collection tools

An overview of how each research question and sub-question will be addressed through the different data collection methods, and different data collection tools, is provided in the Data Analysis Plan.

The scoping FGD interview guides will be only minimally structured. A very basic guide has been drafted (see Data Analysis Plan), but interviewers will be given autonomy to ask questions that are appropriate based on the discussion and the group’s profile. Hence, these FGDs will be more inductive in nature, allowing participants to describe the humanitarian context as they view it, to speak openly about humanitarian needs that they have observed, how needs have changed due to recent shocks, what services have been provided, what services are required, etc. These FGDs will be conducted on the first day of data collection, to further contextualize understanding of the context and, potentially, refine the scope of the subsequent FGDs.

All other tools (three KII tools, three FGD tools and one II tool) will be semi-structured. Each of the tools will consist of questions, sub-questions and probes related to the assessment’s specific objectives and research

questions. Different tools will be developed for the different data collection exercises and different target populations. For a detailed description of questions asked, and how the information captured will help answer the different research (sub)questions, please see the Data Analysis Plan (DAP) (available upon request).⁸

For the FGDs, three different semi-structured tools will be used:

- **IDP – Needs:** these FGDs will focus on general needs of IDPs, both in their area of departure (in Nagero County) and in their areas of settlement (in Wau County). These discussions will focus mainly on challenges communities were facing in their area of departure, and how these have changed as a result of their displacement – by comparing living conditions in both locations.
- **IDP – Displacement:** to be able to fully understand displacement patterns, including modalities of transport and potential movement barriers, separate FGDs will be conducted with IDPs to map their displacement journeys.
- **HC:** this tool will help gather insights from host community members in the areas of settlement in Wau County – mainly focusing on perspectives on how the influx of IDPs has affected needs of host community members in these areas.

While the data collection tools are in English, they will be translated by the field teams into the preferred language during the interview as needed. The SAO/FO will take detailed notes during each data collection exercise using laptops and/or notebooks. Field teams will not collect or record any Personally Identifiable Information (PII) that is not included in the Data Management Plan.

Data collection monitoring

The SAO will closely monitor data collection throughout the various phases of the research cycle. Through daily check-ins with the rest of the field team, the SAO will ensure the tools are effective, flow well, and are sensitive to the context, and to ensure that other considerations for informative and respectful qualitative data collection exercises are implemented. Should any issues occur, the SAO will amend the tools as necessary. Depending on field team capacity, transcripts of each data collection exercise will be prepared as soon as possible after the exercise, along with the accompanying debrief forms. In every data collection exercise, the guiding principles of informed consent, ‘do-no-harm’, confidentiality and respect will be adhered to. Any issues arising shall be reported immediately to the SAO.

3.1 Data processing & analysis

Data processing and analysis will be performed in line with IMPACT’s Minimum Standards Checklist for semi-structured data collection tools. As soon as possible after the data collection exercise, transcripts will be written up in English in a digital Microsoft Word document. The SAO shall organise and save all transcripts on the REACH SharePoint space, under password protection. Throughout this process, the SAO will maintain a data tracker to ensure all planned research activities are completed. All the data will be handled in strict accordance with IMPACT’s Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on the Management of Personally Identifiable Information to safeguard privacy and anonymity of the participants.

All data will be analysed using a Data Saturation and Analysis Grid (DSAG). The DSAGs comprise three “layers” of analysis: Discussion Topics, Discussion Sub-Topics, and Data Points. Discussion Topics are based on questions in each qualitative tool. Discussion Sub-Topics and Data Points will be created using an inductive approach, based on the themes emerging from transcripts. If time allows, qualitative data may also be entered into MAXQDA for further thematic analysis, allowing for identification, analysis and reporting of patterns within data.

⁸ If remote KIIs will be conducted with humanitarian staff in Sudan’s White Nile / Blue Nile state, or border areas, a lighter and less-structured version of the KII tool will be used – as these interviews will primarily focus on cross-border movement and experts’ projections on how population movement is likely to evolve over the second half of 2025. Therefore, parts of the structured KII tool will be redundant and, hence, those questions will be skipped.

Once interview transcripts and enumerator debrief forms have been translated from the local language into English, processing and analysis will result in the following data and analysis to be shared with IMPACT HQ: 1) Enumerator debrief forms, 2) Finalized transcripts in Word document format, 3) a completed DSAG and 4) a completed Method Report (with the DSAG), summarizing data collection and analysis methods used.

1.5 Limitations

Generalisability: Given the chosen sampling strategy, all findings are indicative and not statistically generalizable to the larger population. While the methodology cannot guarantee that the assessment is not missing a particular (vulnerable) population groups' experience, stratification of the focus groups further by gender ensures that a wider variety of perspectives and experiences is captured.

Transcripts: Since interviews will not be audio-recorded, it is likely that “transcripts” will resemble detailed notes. Moreover, as some of the interviews will be translated from the local language to English during the interview by the translator and/or note-taker, it is also possible that some details will be lost in translation or that responses might be abbreviated by the translator. To mitigate this, the team will i) carefully review the transcripts for any translation errors or missing data, and ii) quickly follow up with FOs should any data be deemed wrong or missing, with the aim to correct if possible

Response bias: Participants might provide socially desirable responses or withhold information due to concerns about judgment or stigma. This bias could affect the accuracy and authenticity of the data collected, leading to an incomplete or skewed understanding of the participants' needs and experiences.

Timeliness of findings: Given the dynamic and rapidly evolving context, it is important to note that the findings of this assessment will be based on data collected in November 2025. Therefore, the assessment's findings should be understood within this specific timeframe. As the context may evolve between the time data is collected and the time the research output is published, the research team will strive to minimise this time as much as possible. Furthermore, overall trends and key insights from this study remain highly relevant for understanding humanitarian response planning during times of funding limitations.

4. Key ethical considerations and related risks

Table 3 Key ethical considerations

<i>The proposed research design...</i>	<i>Yes/ No</i>	<i>Details if no (including mitigation)</i>
... Has been coordinated with relevant stakeholders to avoid unnecessary duplication of data collection efforts?	Yes	
... Respects respondents, their rights and dignity (specifically by: seeking informed consent, designing length of survey/ discussion while being considerate of participants' time, ensuring accurate reporting of information provided)?	Yes	
... Does not expose data collectors to any risks as a direct result of participation in data collection?	Yes	
... Does not expose respondents / their communities to any risks as a direct result of participation in data collection?	Yes	
... Does not involve collecting information on specific topics which may be stressful and/ or re-traumatising for research participants (both respondents and data collectors)?	No	The FGD tool for IDPs will contain several questions regarding displacement journeys and perceived feelings of insecurity in areas of origin. While these are sensitive topics, that may be difficult for participants to discuss, the research team will strive to create an open and

		safe environment. The research team will place additional emphasis on participant's informed consent, particularly their right to refuse to answer any question or to terminate the interview at any time. Lastly, more sensitive questions will be placed at the end of the data collection tool, to ease participants into the discussion and allow for sufficient time to set a safe atmosphere.
... Does not involve data collection with minors i.e. anyone less than 18 years old?	Yes	
... Does not involve data collection with other vulnerable groups e.g. persons with disabilities, victims/ survivors of protection incidents, etc.?	No	While we will not intentionally target victims/survivors of protection incidents, it is plausible that some of the sampled participants will be – as is almost always the case in South Sudan. Please see above for mitigation measures when it comes to discussing sensitive topics.
... Follows IMPACT SOPs for management of personally identifiable information ?	Yes	

5. Roles and responsibilities

Table 4 Roles and responsibilities

Task Description	Responsible	Accountable	Consulted	Informed
Research design	SAO	Country Representative (CR)	GIS Officer, IMPACT HQ Global Emergencies Unit	IMPACT HQ Research Department
Supervising data collection	SAO, FO	CR	CR	CR
Data processing (checking, cleaning)	SAO	CR	IMPACT HQ RDDU	IMPACT HQ Global Emergencies Unit
Data analysis	SAO	CR	IMPACT HQ RDDU	IMPACT HQ Global Emergencies Unit
Output production	SAO	CR	IMPACT HQ Global Emergencies Unit	IMPACT HQ RDDU
Dissemination	SAO	CR	CR	IMPACT HQ, FCDO, Clusters (e.g. Health Cluster, WASH Cluster, Nutrition Cluster)
M&E	IMPACT PD	IMPACT PD	IMPACT HQ	IMPACT HQ
Lessons learned	SAO	CR	CR	CR

Responsible: the person(s) who executes the task

Accountable: the person who validates the completion of the task and is accountable of the final output or milestone

Consulted: the person(s) who must be consulted when the task is implemented

Informed: the person(s) who need to be informed when the task is completed

6. Data Analysis Plan

The Data Analysis Plan is available upon request.

7. Data Management Plan

Table 5 Data Management Plan

Administrative Data				
Research Cycle name	Wau IDP Emergency Assessment 2025			
Project Code	32GBK			
Donor	FCDO			
Project partners	n/a			
Research Contacts	Maartje Schots – maartje.schots@impact-initiatives.org Mary Langan – mary.langan@impact-initiatives.org			
Data Management Plan Version	Date:	Version: 1		
Related Policies	IMPACT Minimum Standards for Qualitative Data Processing and Analysis IMPACT Guidelines for SOPs for Management of Personally Identifiable Data			
Documentation and Metadata				
What documentation and metadata will accompany the data? <i>Select all that apply</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Data analysis plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	Data Cleaning Log, including: <input type="checkbox"/> Deletion Log <input type="checkbox"/> Value Change Log
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Code book	<input type="checkbox"/>	Data Dictionary
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Metadata based on HDX Standards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	DSAG
Ethics and Legal Compliance				
Which ethical and legal measures will be taken?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Consent of participants to participate	<input type="checkbox"/>	Consent of participants to share personal information with other agencies
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No collection of personally identifiable data will take place	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Gender, child protection and other protection issues are taken into account
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	All participants reached age of majority		[Other, Specify]
Who will own the copyright and Intellectual Property Rights for the data that is collected?	IMPACT (REACH) and FCDO			
Storage and Backup				
Where will data be stored and backed up during the research?	<input type="checkbox"/>	IMPACT/REACH Kobo Server	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other Kobo Server: <i>[specify]</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	IMPACT Global Physical / Cloud Server	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Country/Internal Server
	<input type="checkbox"/>	On devices held by REACH staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	Physical location <i>[specify]</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	[Other, Specify]		
Which data access and security measures have been taken?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Password protection on devices/servers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Data access is limited to the Assessment officer and Research Manager
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Form and data encryption on data collection server	<input type="checkbox"/>	Partners signed an MoU if accessing raw data
	<input type="checkbox"/>	[Other, Specify]		
Kobo Access Rights				
Kobo Access	Person	Account Name		
n/a				

Raw Data Access Rights					
Raw Data Access	Reason			Person	
Access	Data Quality checks			Maartje Schots, Assessment Officer	
Preservation					
Where will data be stored for long-term preservation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	IMPACT / REACH Global Cloud / Physical Server		<input type="checkbox"/>	OCHA HDX
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	REACH Country Server		<input type="checkbox"/>	[Other, Specify]
Data Sharing					
Will the data be shared publicly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No, only with mandating agency / body
Will all data be shared?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No, only anonymised/ cleaned data will be shared
	<input type="checkbox"/>	No, [Other, Specify]			
Where will you share the data?	<input type="checkbox"/>	REACH Resource Centre		<input type="checkbox"/>	OCHA HDX
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Humanitarian Response		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	With client
Data protection risk assessment					
Have you completed the Indicators Risk Assessment table below?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No, no information that potentially allows identification of individuals is to be collected.
	[Please complete the first 4 columns in the Indicators Risk Assessment table below]				
Risk indicator (including direct and indirect identifiers)	Type of identification risk	Disclosure implications	Benefits	Class	Required mitigation
Responsibilities					
Data collection	Maartje Schots – Assessment Officer - maatje.schots@impact-initiatives.org Samuel Marle – Field Officer – Samuel.marle@reach-initiative.org				
Data cleaning	Maartje Schots – Assessment Officer - maatje.schots@impact-initiatives.org				
Data analysis	Maartje Schots – Assessment Officer - maatje.schots@impact-initiatives.org				
Data sharing/uploading	Maartje Schots – Assessment Officer - maatje.schots@impact-initiatives.org Mary Langan – Country Representative - mary.langan@impact-initiatives.org				