**Conflict assessment report in Upper Nile.**

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# **Situation overview**

Upper Nile State is located in South Sudan’s north-eastern region. It has a total area of 77,283 sq km and an estimated population of 964,353. The state is composed of 13 counties which include Akoka, Bailet, Fashoda, Longochuk, Maban, Maiwut, Makal, Manyo, Melut, Luakpiny/Nasser, Panyikang, Renk and Ulang. The state’s dominant tribe is Shilluk but also has residents from the Nuer and Dinka tribes, the Bari-speaking groups as well as Arabs. Agriculture is the primary economic activity in Upper Nile. People are nomadic agro-pastoralists who engage in both agriculture and the rearing of livestock, primarily cattle. Local farmers are particularly susceptible to the vagaries of the area’s unpredictable weather patterns, a factor which greatly affects their productivity from year to year. Even when rains come, its patterns are unreliable and sparse, making it difficult for farmers to plan effective crop rotations. Combined with other environmental deterrents such as the outbreak of pests, disease and flooding, farming in Upper Nile has become a complex and difficult endeavour with little promise of a successful crop yield or food security[[1]](#footnote-1). Floods have become particularly pronounced in recent years. Farmers have refused to plant in some areas, especially in the lowlands, for fear of loss of agricultural capital. There are markets in each county and location and access is mostly affected by the dynamic ethnic tension. For instance in Malakal, the big market is in the town and people living in the UNMISS Protection of Civilian POC ( Shiluk and Nuer) have access only at the time of peaceful interaction with the town residents ( the Dinka).

When fighting broke out in Juba on December 2013, the violence had spread throughout the country. Control of Malakal switched between the government and the rebels six times in the first six months of the war. During this time forces associated with Dinka and Shilluk remained loyal to the government while many of the Nuer forces in Malakal revolted due to the killings of Nuer civilians in Juba. Civilians living in Upper Nile state fled to UN compound in Malakal, to other states and crossed the borders to neighbouring countries. The August 2015 peace agreement between the government and the SPLM/A-IO brought hope for the people in the state; however, the president decree of administrative in October 2015 that increased the ten states to 28 created another contention. In the 2015 new structure, Malakal was located in Eastern Nile State, surrounded by almost all Dinka Padang land, which the Shiluk in the POC participated in the focus group discussion believed that it was effectively planned to annex Malakal under Dinka land. Shilluk anger at the proposed division of the state has already led to increased support for Johnson Olonyi, who was aligned with the Government but defected and joined the SPLM-IO in May 2015. In February 2020, as a result of a peace agreement that ended the South Sudanese Civil War, the country returned to the original 10 states plus two administrative areas[[2]](#footnote-2) and, as a result, Upper Nile is returned to its former one unified state structure. Although the one state structure ease the anger of the Shiluk and Nuer, the delay in the appointment of the state governors in the current transitional government is became a dire issue as mentioned during the FGD and KII interviews conducted in the POC. The SPLM-IO nominated Olonyi to be the governor of the Upper Nile state on June 2020, but he is not appointed by the president and the people in the POC believed that the Malakal town residents and administrators have a stake on this as they suspect Olonyi will take measures on issues like land ownership reform of Malakal town. As per the Malakal town focus group participants, as Olonyi is from Shiluk and has entirely shiluk militia, they are afraid that he might not do justice on solving some of the contentious issues, particularly the land.

In recent political development, President Salva Kiir has finally appointed a governor and a deputy for Upper Nile State, who are different from the first nominee of the SPLM-IO, Johnson Olonyi. In a presidential decree, Kiir appointed Abudhok Anyang Kur as governor and James Tor Monybuny as his deputy effective January 29 2021[[3]](#footnote-3). Dr. Macher, The head of SPLM-IO and the first vice president in the transitional government, on 22 January, had requested Olony to come to Juba to dissipate fears and rebuild confidence with the president otherwise he would be forced to nominate another governor, but the latter declined the invitation[[4]](#footnote-4). Machar finally nominated others and the president then quickly confirmed the appointment[[5]](#footnote-5). Olony publicly rejected his replacement by any other candidate saying "After consulting with the political and military leadership, and on the background of Macher phone call regarding my going to Juba or changing me to another candidate, the political and military leadership refused to replace the candidate Johnson Olony with another candidate[[6]](#footnote-6). On top of the influence on the national political process, the new appointment created rift between Machar and Olony and it could lead to violence between supporters of both men[[7]](#footnote-7).

According to Community Empowerment for Progress Organization (CEPO) report, despite an overall decrease in political violence since the signing of the 2018 Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan, At least 2,450 South Sudanese died due to intercommunal violence and armed cattle raiding in 2020,. The greater Upper Nile region accounted for 37 percent of all these deaths[[8]](#footnote-8).

Generally, Upper Nile state in general and Malakal in particular is still the political hotspot which needs coordinated effort of the peace actors to support the transition process.

## **Objectives of the assessment**

The proposed Conflict Analysis will be conducted in an inclusive, participatory and gender-focused manner, and aimed:

* To capture the major socio-economic characteristics of the selected locations and to understand their interaction with communal conflict.
* To identify the major factors that fuel conflict (conflict drivers) and build peace (peace engines) including the ways in which gender and age interact with conflict
* To discover entry-points for PaCC conflict prevention and peacebuilding work

## **Methodology**

The assessment will employ qualitative methods using key informant interview, document review and focus groups discussion as a data collection technique**.** The assessment will be participatory, inclusive and will capture facts from insider point of view.The data collection will follow the conflict dynamics of each conflict incident to have deeper understanding of the causes, actors, effects, peace actors and gaps. The qualitative data will be analysed manually. Snowball sampling technique were used to select participants of the assessment.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| S. N | Methods | Participants |
| 1 | Key informant interview | 3 government officials, 2 UN agencies, 2 INGOs, 2 CSOs, 2 IDPs, |
| 2 | FGD | Youth and women groups (to facilitate more discussion and understand group dynamics). |
| 3 | Discussion/ meeting | With all government senior cabinets |

## **Scope of the assessment:**

The geographical focus will cover the Upper Nile state (based on the current administrative structure). the assessment team will visit Malakal, the capital of the state but will travel to other filed location due to travel restriction. The team will use secondary data, using primary sources in Malakal to provide data on the other location to fill the information gap. The assessment is conducted from 16- 21 November.The assessment covers the major conflict dynamics in the state.

# **Major Conflict dynamics and Conflict drivers**

## **POC and Malakal town Conflict Dynamics**

Malakal is a strategic military base and is the administrative capital of Upper Nile state, where 80 percent of South Sudan’s pre-crisis oil production originates. The opposition and the government have fought bitterly for control of Malakal, which stands out as one of the war’s most protracted location. Malakal has experienced more confrontations between government and opposition forces than any other town. The town is almost destroyed as it changed hands six times between government and opposition forces in the first three months of the crisis[[9]](#footnote-9). The people from all over the state flee in due to the conflict and occupied the UNMISS POC. Soon after the civilians entered, the protection of civilians (POC) in UNMISS Malakal was divided into three areas: one for each major ethnic group: Shilluk, Nuer and Dinka, reportedly at their own request and for their own protection. Though kept apart, conflict broke out occasionally between different communities, most did not involve firearms and were quickly halted by UN peacekeepers. On February 2016 Violence erupted in a PoC and there are strong indications that government military forces were also involved in the fighting. In less than a day 30 people were killed, 120 injured and burned down most of the Shilluk and Nuer sections. All Dinka and Darfuri IDPs departed the POC and moved to Malakal town before and during the fighting and occupied the town[[10]](#footnote-10). In addition to the historical conflict, mainly between the Dinka and Shiluk over territorial ownership and political alignment, the 2016 POC attack put fuel on it. So, there are continuous conflict and tension between the POC, and the town residents and the major conflict drivers are**:**

**Major Conflict Dynamics**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Conflict issues | Causes | Actors | Effects | Possible Action |
| **Land dispute** | When the Dinka moved out of the POC after the 2016 attack, they occupied Malakal town which the Shiluk in the POC claimed as their land. As per the UNHCR and IOM intention study, the vast majority (97%) of POC residents indicated that their habitual residence prior to displacement was in Malakal town[[11]](#footnote-11). The participants of the youth FGD in the POC said that the Shiluk in POC believed that, the initial delay in the appointment of Johnson Olony as governor for Upper Nile state is associated with the land contention and claim over the town- Malakal. The Malakal town FDG participants also said that, as Olony and his entire militia are from Shiluk, the Dinka living in the town are fearing that he will redistribute the land they occupied to the Shiliks in the POC. The POC youth reported during the focus group discussion that “the Dinka in the town raised the land distribution issues and their fear over Johnson Olony to the president and the president hold the appointment of the governor.” land ownership issue also existed in some pocket counties, such as Billet. Now the new governor is appointed, and land distribution and ownership right will be the major challenge, on top of the political dynamics. | Shilik in the POC and Dinka residents of the town. There is small involvement of the Nuer. | Former Shilluk residents of the PoC have been attacked as they tried to resettle outside it[[12]](#footnote-12).  This might end up in large scale conflict unless managed by listening the views of all parties involved. | * Support the new administration to conduct dialogue on land issue * Facilitate enter- ethnic dialogue together with partners * Established / strengthen the conflict early warning and response system |
| **huge grievance and animosity** | There is huge grievance and animosity among ethnic groups, particularly between Shiluk and Dinka on the impact of the conflict in general and as a result of the 2016 POC attack in particular. On 17/18 February 2016, armed Dinka militia entered UNMISS Malakal PoC and were killed and injured Shiluk and Nuer IDPs. None of the Dinka or Darfuri shelters were destroyed, but all Nuer and Shiluk shelters were burned throughout the PoC. The humanitarians and the government moved the Dinka IDPs out of the POC, and they settled in the town. During the focus group discussion with the POC youth (most are from Shiluk), they expressed their grievance over the incident, and they didn’t seem recovered from that feeling. For instance, the executives of the youth centre in the POC were asked about their marriage preference and 80% of Shiluk men prefer to marry Nuer girls at the first choice and the rest choose shiluk. Similarly, 60% of the Shiluk girls prefer marrying Nuer man and the rest choose Shiluk. None of the youth choose Dinka at the first chose and majority reasoned that this is due to the scar as a result of the consecutive conflict and the following rhetoric they were listening for years. Relatively speaking, the youths in the town has less grievance and seems willing for positive interaction but they don’t show interest to discuss about the land issue, which is the major agenda for the Shiluk in the POC | Between Dinka and Shiluk ethnic groups and Nuer and Dinka ethnic groups | This affected the peace building process and it needs comprehensive measure (political included) to heal. | * Social cohesion and interdependency initiatives to bring the two divided communities together * Psychosocial support and trauma healing to reduce facilitate reconciliation * Participating youth and women in the peace building process |
| **Youth (boys and girls) unemployment and hopelessness** | There is a huge youth bulge both in the POC and in the town who are highly affected by the continuous conflict and displacement. Almost all didn’t go to school and they didn’t have alternative opportunity to make a living. As per the youth key informants in the POC, majority are now drinking alcohol, involving in pity theft and robbery, GBV and fights. They are easily mobilized for conflict. The situation of youth created a fertile ground for the political parties to easily engage them in conflict and for ethnicization of the conflict. Most of the youth are loyal to the political faction organized in their ethnic groups, for instance, the Shiluk and the Nuer are living in relative harmony as there is similar accord between the political partiers organized in their ethnics. On the contrary both the Nuer and Shiluk youths have a feeling of resentment over the Dinka youths and vis-à-vis as the reflection of the political parties organized on their respective ethnic groups. Girls and children are the most affected by the conflict and most of the ill behaviour of the community (like GBV, forced and early marriage, child labour …) are practiced on them. | Youth (Boys and Girls) and Children | The young boys are involved in alcohol, drugs and the like and commute criminal activity ( GBV, Theft, Robbery ..). this ends up in causing conflict. They mobilized and participated in conflict  The girls and Children are mostly affected by GBV ( child or forced marriage), sexual and other forms of violence | * Involving youth in peace building and other community activities * Create vocational skill opportunities and link them to income generating initiatives * Establish recreational activities for interdependency and psychosocial support * Train youths on GBV * Empower girls through skill training and mentorship program |
| **Proliferation of weapons on the hands of civilians** | As Upper Nile state is the major contention and consecutive war front between SPLA and the SPLA-IO, weapon is highly abundant in the area. As per the finding of the KII in the town and POC, most of civilians have weapons and there was no attempt for disarmament so far. The DDR office opened and started operating in Malakal but they only working on the integration of the ex-combatants, not on the disarmament. Having weapon on the hands of civilians, coupled with the political and ethnic tension, makes the situation in Upper Nile very fragile and all interviewed participants agreed that the situation is so unpredictable. Conflict in Malakal and the surrounding has huge impact on the national peacebuilding effort as most of the national political actors has strong interest in the area. | Civilians particularly ex combatants | Civilians with guns participated in armed conflict that cost the life and livelihood of the majority ( such as the white army[[13]](#footnote-13)) in Upper Nile. | * Support the DRR office of the government to facilitate the disarmament process ( from dialogue to either disposal or safe storage) * Support the reintegration of ex-combatant to the community * Motivation for the disarmament process ( through 3x6 or any context appropriate method) |
| **The lifting of the protection aspect of the UNMISS also created frustration** | UNMISS plans to lift the protection aspect and give the responsibility to the government. The POC are in the process of On the 4 September 2020, the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) in South Sudan announced in a press conference that UNMISS had begun to ‘progressively withdraw its troops and police from the Bor and Wau PoCs’, and to redesignate the sites ‘no longer PoC sites but camps for internally displaced people (IDP) under the jurisdiction of the government’ (UNMISS 4 September 2020)[[14]](#footnote-14).changing to IDP sites and this created frustration, especially on the POC residents, as there is no formal governor and the communities are still highly divided on ethnic and political lines. The unified force is not yet taking effect (they are still in the cantonment) and are still aligned with their ethnic lines. | POC residents and some Malakal town residents | * The POC residents security may be compromised due to unpredictable political situation in the location. As per the POC FGD participants, they fear attack again if the political tension continued between Juba and the Shiluk militia. | * Strengthen the government security sector to provide protection service for citizens * Link the community conflict early warning structure to the security sector * Establish/ strengthen community conflict prevention and mitigation structure ( such as peace committees, COTAL …) * Support the reconstitution of the peace commission to play peace actors coordination role |
| **GBV and gender issues** | Since the outbreak of the armed conflict in December 2013, civilians have borne the brunt of violence in South Sudan. While conflict-related violations and abuses, including sexual violence, have largely decreased since the signing of the R-ARCSS, rape, gang rape, sexual slavery and forced marriage, which were common features of attacks targeting civilians during active hostilities involving parties to the conflict, have persisted[[15]](#footnote-15). The female key informant interviewee in Malakal POC said “forced marriages, sexual violence, wife beating, and some incidents of rape are rampant in the POC. The youth mostly drinks alcohol during daytime as they are not working, and they are the prime perpetrators. We are sometimes afraid of going out for toilet or fetching water after dark”. As per ACLED report, the top perceived threats inside Malakal POCis sexual and gender-based violence (especially at night) and criminality[[16]](#footnote-16). Same source confirmed that the major perceived threat outside the camp is also physical and sexual violence (esp. from soldiers) and retribution. The situation in the town seems worse as described by Female FGD participants “the huge dowry requirement of the Dinka community in the town makes marriage difficult for the youth and this forced them to engage in violence including GBV. Almost all the youth doesn’t have income or daily jobs and they engage in alcohol and similar activities. Rape, forced and child marriage and wife beating are the top identified by the participants as common in Malakal town”. | Women and girls | Survivors of violence suffer sexual and reproductive health **consequences**, including forced and unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions, trauma, sexually transmitted infections including HIV | * Awareness raising on GBV for the community in general and the youth in particular * Empower women to involve in the peace building process * Support women economic empowerment * Support girls education * Involve men to fight GBV |

## **Maban Conflict Dynamics**

Maban County is located in Upper Nile State in the northeaster corner of South Sudan, with the international border with Sudan to the east (and Ethiopia beyond that), and domestic county borders with Longochuk to the south, Renk to the north, and Baliet and Melut counties to the west (with the state capital Malakal further to the west). Bunj, a very small market town located in east Maban, is the county capital[[17]](#footnote-17). There has been historical conflict between local Maban ethnic groups with the Dinka groups from Melut and Renk counties and Nuer from Longochuk County due to competition over water for people and animals, land and border disputes, tension over taxation rights. Intermarriage and commercial ties, especially with Nuer from Longochuk County, have helped to mitigate the escalation of such conflicts[[18]](#footnote-18).

Currently the major tension and consecutive conflict in Maban is because of the refugees and host communities in the area. Sudan’s civil war over the border in the Blue Nile state has had a detrimental impact on Maban County. The Sudanese government periodically bombed sites in Maban County, claiming that the SPLA was supporting the SPLA-North active in Blue Nile, even as the SPLA-IO used rear bases in Blue Nile to train its troops. The scale of the refugee influx from Sudan outnumbered and the natural resources – including, land, food, and shelter material – strained18. 156,496[[19]](#footnote-19) refugees are living in the five Maban refugee camps who are fleeing a five-year-old conflict between Sudanese government and the rebels. The daily security within Maban County has been poor since the arrival of the refugees in 2012, with all groups affected by insecurity. Anywhere between 50 to 90 host community members and refugees have died due to conflict between the two groups, with an unknown number of IDPs killed[[20]](#footnote-20). The refugees are putting enormous pressure on the host community, have ethnic tensions among themselves and created humanitarian challenges. In May 2017, fierce fighting broke out among the tribes in the refugee camps, leaving dozens dead and much of the temporary infrastructure, built by the United Nations, burned and looted. As a result, thousands of families were relocated by the UN, and the camps are now divided along tribal lines[[21]](#footnote-21). The number of the refugees outnumber the host community, and some refugees are ex-combatants and have weapons.

The tensions between host and refugee communities has been exacerbated by the host communities’ perception that they do not benefit from refugee response and that NGOs hiring practices have lead providing jobs and resources to South Sudanese from elsewhere in the county. This has made safe access for humanitarian organizations a recurrent concern. This is demonstrated by a deadly attack on several South Sudanese aid workers by local militias in August 2014 and attacks on UN and NGO compounds in Bunj in July 2018 and December 2019. This followed a series of events, in which aid organizations faced access issues including the commandeering of vehicles, fixing of market prices and imposed fees18.

**Major Conflict Dynamics**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Conflict issues | Causes | Actors | Effects | Possible Action |
| **Feeling of excluded from aid** | The host communities believed that they are not getting any benefit from refugee response in the location and this created huge tension with refugees and aid agencies. The host communities said that “*our living status is not different from the refugees, we are affected by the conflict and hardly meet our basic need, but most of the aid targets the refugees living in the camps*”. This issue is raised by the youth and the government official and it seems that it is a common agenda for the host community. | The host communities particularly the youth and the humanitarian agencies | Conflict and loss of lives and livelihoods as evidenced by a deadly attack on several South Sudanese aid workers by local militias in August 2014 and attacks on UN and NGO compounds in Bunj in July 2018 and December 2019[[22]](#footnote-22) | * Facilitate continuous Dialogue between the youth ( refugees and hosts) * Institute interdependency and social cohesion activities * Provide basic infrastructure support, like building water scheme for the host communities * Support the government security sector |
| **Competition over natural resource** | As the number of refugees are ever increasing, the demand on natural resources, especially land and water, is also rising from time to time. These created Stiff competition with the host communities and became the basic factor for conflict. In December 2016, the outbreak of violence between the host community and refugees resulted in the death of nearly 90 people and destruction of many assets. The humanitarian working in the location built few water points and tries to address other issues, but it didn’t meet the huge demand | The host and refugees | Conflict between the host and the refugees and this costed loose of life and livelihoods | * Build some basic infrastructures, such as water schemes, * Create dialogue mechanism to agree on the use of resource in the location * Establish/ strengthen conflict early warning and response system |
| **Robbery, theft and other dysfunctional activities** | Robbery, theft and alcohol is also mentioned as one of the major factors for conflict between the refugees and host community. This is exacerbated by the low level of law enforcement and poor quality of the judicial systems within Maban County. There is little capacity to effectively investigate crimes in the area, leaving the majority, especially minor crimes such as theft or minor incidents of violence, unsolved and unpunished. These unsolved crimes are often blamed on the other group: the host community blaming the refugees and refugees blaming the host community | Refugee and host communities, particularly youth | Loose of livelihood and mostly end up in conflict | * Strengthen security sector report * Establish youth dialogue and youth recreational center that foster youth to engage in constructive engagement |
| **Lack of employment opportunity for youths** | like Malakal town, there is high youth population in Maban with no opportunities for economic engagement. The youth and community elders raised complain about the NGOs working in the location as they believe they don’t give job opportunity for local youths. The youth said that most of the national staffs are from elsewhere and only few are from the area. The youth were in conflict with the humanitarians and the tension is still there | Youth ( Boys and Girls), both refugees and hosts | Engaged in criminal activities including conflict, GBV … | * Create alternative livelihood opportunity for the youth through skill training |
| **Proliferation of weapons in the hands of civilians, especially the refugees** | Arms within the camps and outside have proven to be a problem that contributes to increased insecurity for all communities and stressed relations between host community for refugees. Efforts were made in early 2016 to enforce the removal of weapons from the camps and the refugees and host communities believed this increased the security situation and relationship between the two groups. | Civilians particularly ex-combatants | Civilians with guns participated in armed conflict that cost the life and livelihood of the majority | * Support the DRR office of the government to facilitate the disarmament process ( from dialogue to either disposal or safe storage) * Support the reintegration of ex-combatant to the community * Motivation for the disarmament process ( through 3x6 or any context appropriate method) |

## **Conflict dynamics around Cattle Migration route**

According to UNMISS civil affairs, millions and millions of cattle are migrating from Sudan (the Felata) to Upper Nile state through Renk during the dry season. Ministry of Agricultural officials estimate that in total around 5,000,000 head of cattle enter the State each year from Sudanese states[[23]](#footnote-23). Renk County occupies an area of 32,000 km2 and is located in the northern part of the Upper Nile State, along the eastern side of the White Nile some 500 km south of Khartoum. The total population is estimated to be 189,061[[24]](#footnote-24). The major ethnic groups in Renk County are the Shilluk, Denka Bellang, Nger, Dagu, Burun, Funj and Selaim[[25]](#footnote-25).

Renk saw heavy clashes involving the Sudanese Armed forces, SPLA forces, and local militias during the Sudan civil wars of 1955 – 2005. The SPLA’s 1st Division was stationed in Renk in 2005, and Renk town became the temporary state capital after Malakal fell to SPLA-IO rebels in February 2014. Holding Renk was a priority for the SPLA partially because the oil pipeline from Paloich runs through the county. In both 2014 and 2015, SPLA-IO attacked Renk County from Wadkona/Wad Dakona payam of Manyo County to the west, in an attempt to control the area.22

Renk County’s strategic location at the north of the country and nearby natural resources have been a point of contention during the country’s civil wars. There has also been significant violence and conflict, particularly around the movement of Falata cattle herders through Dinka Abilang areas. The nature of migration in Sudan has been in the form of nomadic migrants moving in search of water and grass, a critical resource that determines success of pastoralism as a way of life. The location where water and grass are found in abundance in the South is where the Arab nomads have settled with their livestock during the migration season from October to May/June in every given year. In the dry season in many parts of the South temporary portable water sources dry up leaving the larger ponds/streams. Some members of the local population remain in their permanent villages’ and rely on ponds and boreholes. Meanwhile, others will move with their cattle to the swarms, streams and main rivers during the dry season. This is where usually local inhabitants intermingle with the Arab nomads which cause occasional conflicts[[26]](#footnote-26). Community consultations carried out in the area found that conflict drivers included environmental pollution, competition over clean water, land and border disputes, and tension over taxation rights with neighbouring counties such as Melut, Maban and Akoka[[27]](#footnote-27).

UNMISS and other peace actors are supporting the migration conferences to smoothen the process, but the tension is very high. As per civil affairs report, the migration is the highest (in terms of number of cattle in the move) in country. Despite the migration conferences and agreements, still:

**Major Conflict Dynamics**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Conflict issues | Causes | Actors | Effects | Possible Action |
| Conflict over natural resource including water | There is competition over water and other natural resources between migrating pastoralists and host communities and this became a source of conflict in almost all migration seasons. Especially water points are spelled out by civil affairs as one of the major factors. In addition the pastoralists are sometime destroying the agricultural products of the host during the move. | Migrating pastoralists and the host communities | Conflict and loose of lives. It also affect the economy and other aspect as the migration is benefiting the host with market ( buying and selling of goods) | * Building water scheme in some critical locations * Strengthen the cattle migration conference * Strengthen conflict early warning system * Strengthen the migration peace building effort coordination system |
| Migration taxation system | The migration taxation system is not well organized, and pastoralists are raising concern on double taxation. the migration route covers wide location: it can be broken down into ‘West Bank’ and ‘Eastern Stretch’. Groups join the former from the White Nile to the north and from South Kordofan to the west. Transhumance on the latter come from White Nile, Sennar and Blue Nile States to the north and east. These Groups move to all counties except Baliet and Ulang, where the land is too swampy20. This traveling through intra state borders exposed pastoralists to multiple taxation and similar challenge as there is no effective coordination said the former peace commission head. So this created issues and sometimes conflict as the pastoralist refused paying again (ibid). | State and government lower administration offices, Traditional leaders and Migrating pastoralists | Loose of lives and livelihoods as the result of conflict | * Strengthen coordination and discussion on taxation issues * Include taxation as an agenda in the migration conference |
| Women and youths don’t participate in migration conference | Despite women and youth are the prime vulnerable groups when conflict erupted in the migration routes, their participation in the peace building process is not visible. This is because of the long standing status of women and youth in the community as explained by UNMISS CA during the KII. UNMISS CA are incorporating them in some of the activities and but still they need to be empowered to contribute their share for the peace building process and to get benefit out of it. | Women, youth and peacebuilding actors ( including migrating pastoralists) | This will hamper women and youth empowerment on the issues of their concern | * Support youth and women groups to be vocal and play key role in the peace building process * Organize community dialogue and awareness on GBV and women empowerment * Support women and youth groups to play active role in advocacy |
| Warrior mentality of pastoralists | The migration into Upper Nile State is organised according to separate county-by-county and payam-by payam agreements in the context of an overarching message of support from the state government. They state governors tried to have a policy on hosting unarmed nomads but The policy of welcoming unarmed nomads did not apply to all groups20. The pastoralists are well armed and have warrior mentality and these challenges the peaceful resolution of the conflict | Pastoralist and local authorities | Conflict which disrupt the overall peace process | * Discuss about arms and arms control during pre and post migration conference * Empower the local governors in mediation and negotiation skill |
| Destroying the host communities farm products | Some pastoralist doesn’t follow the migration route agreed on the pre-migration conference and end up in destroying the host communities land. | Pastoralist and host communities | Conflict end up loose of life and livelihoods | * Strengthen the pre and post migration conferences * Support the implementation of the resolution of the migration conferences during breach on the resolution * Train community leaders from both side on conflict resolution and mediation |
| The host community don’t understand fully the economic benefit of cattle migration | Despite the cattle migration has huge economic benefits (as said by UNMISS Civils affairs and the former peace commission chairperson), this is not well communicated with the public and as a result, the community still have negative attitude about the practice. So, few disagreements may end up on deadly conflict as the community don’t have prior buy in on the practice. As per the UNMISS civil affairs key inform interviewee “Nomadic groups using the West Bank routes bring milk and meat to markets on the East Bank and purchase goods. For communities, this eases the price of cattle, meat and milk. In addition they also buy local product like simsim and cereals and this opened market for local communities.” | Host communities | has impact on the overall economy of the state | * Awareness raising on the benefit of cattle migration if done as per the law of the land and peacefully |

## **Eastern Nuer Conflict dynamics**

The Eastern Nuer area include Nasir, Longochok, Mawuit and others are one of the main conflict’s hotspot in Upper Nile state that Nuer tribes are usually conflicting each other. Luakpiny/Nasir County, and the port in Nasir town in particular, is located along the strategically important Sobat riverine traffic, which eventually flows into the White Nile. The town is symbolically important for the SPLA-IO as it was where Riek Machar announced his 1991 split from the SPLA and formed the SPLA-Nasir faction during the Second Sudanese Civil War. Similar to other counties, there are significant conflict drivers in the county, which is reflected in local violence, cattle raiding, tension between local communities and oil companies operating nearby, competition over land, access to water, and border disputes that determine taxation rights with neighbouring counties.  The seasonal movement of Arab pastoralists from Sudan – known locally as ‘Falat’ – into Luakpiny/Nasir County has also been a source of tension[[28]](#footnote-28).

Longochuk County is located in Upper Nile State. It borders Maiwut County to the south-east, Luakpiny/Nasir to the south-west, Baliet County to the west and Maban County to the north. Even prior to the outbreak of conflict in 2013, Longochuk County was characterized by local violence, often cattle raids and revenge killings, between Nuer clans and neighbouring nomadic groups. such clashes are often driven by competition over access to water, food insecurity and unemployment[[29]](#footnote-29) . Similar conflict drivers exist in Maiwut: lack of access to clean water, competition for fertile land, and the cross-border flow of small arms as the main drivers of local insecurity. Maiwut has also hosted significant numbers of IDPs and refugees, which has contributed to tensions between these groups and host communities[[30]](#footnote-30).

These locations are entirely occupied by Nuer ethnic groups and there is less tension on the basis of ethnicity. Despite the fact there is continuous clashes which are related to revenge killing and competition over natural resources. dry season, as mentioned by UNMISS civil affairs, is the point where the conflict spike and halt on the rainy season.

**Major conflict Dynamics**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Conflict issues | Causes | Actors | Effects | Possible Action |
| cattle raids and revenge killings | As per UNDP partners staff, cattle raiding in the eastern Nuer is common practice usually done by youths for dowry and fame reason. As youth are required to pay large number of cattle, most fulfil that gap by raiding cattle. As per the above source, revenge killing is also associated with the cattle raiding and GBV. According to KII with UNMISS CA revenge killing usually increase during dry season and it continues for many season till they traditionally settle it by compensation. The authorises in the location don’t have the means to control the conflict and to sustain rule of law and as a result the traditional leaders ( Chiefs and paramount Chiefs) play key role in solving the conflict. | Youth, Women and girls, Traditional leaders and Local authorities | Loose of lives and livelihoods | * Establish / strengthen the local peace infrastructure ( such as peace committee) and link it to the security sectors * Strengthen conflict early warning and response mechanism * Strengthen the security sector to lead the peace building and rule of law process * Train the traditional leaders to use their influence on conflict prevention * Involve youths in interdependency and social cohesion intervention to build trust * Create alternative livelihood opportunity for youth through skill training |
| Competition over resources | The area, like most location in South Sudan lucks clean water and pasture in some location. The lack of water during the dry season and cattle raiding are inter-related. Cattle-raiding peaks during the dry season when nomads migrate to river banks in search of water and pasture for their animals. Competing for such limited resources often led to clashes[[31]](#footnote-31). | Communities living in eastern Nuer in general and youth and women in particular ( as youth participate in the conflict and women are mostly affected by the conflict) | Loose of life and livelihood and it also become a cause for revenge killing | * Construct water points in strategic location by conducting a through conflict sensitivity assessment * Organize community dialogue to foster peaceful coexistence * Involve youths in interdependency initiatives |

## **Dinka Akoka Vs Shiluk (Fashoda) Conflict dynamics**

The Shilik in Fashda and the Dinaka living in Akoka town of Balliet coun has longstanding conflict and tension mostly related to land and county borders[[32]](#footnote-32). Fashoda County has been a hotspot for intercommunal conflict for several decades and is seen by the Shilluk community to be the heart of their kingdom. Territorial disputes and conflict between Shilluk and Padang Dinka communities on both sides of the White Nile date back to second Sudanese civil war. During that period – and particularly from the late 1980s onwards – Padang Dinka communities moved into land on either side of the White Nile that the Shilluk community considers their own. Since March 2015, these militias have burnt Shilluk settlements, killed Shilluk civilians, and attacked the Agwelek forces of Johnson Olonyi. Over the course of 2015, the ethnic conflict shifted from the east to the west bank of the White Nile[[33]](#footnote-33). Dinka militias initially focused their attacks on Shilluk forces in Akoka county, notably at Lelo. Since mid-2015, however, these forces have intermittently moved onto the west bank, attacking civilians and fighters in the heartland of Shilluk territory. Since February 2016, the east bank of the White Nile has been firmly under the control of the SPLA and its associated militia forces and the west bank remains largely under the control of Shilluk forces29. Currently, the Shilluk live in Fashoda County, while the Padang Dinka live in Akoka town in neighbouring Baliet County. Community consultations by UNDP found that key drivers of insecurity in the area include: land and border disputes, tensions over access to water sources and grazing land, as well as high youth unemployment which prompts cattle raids and substance abuse[[34]](#footnote-34).

**Major Conflict Dynamics**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Conflict issues | Causes | Actors | Effects | Possible Action |
| Land and border dispute | Decades of territorial disputes between Shilluk and Dinka Padang have led to centralized narrative that use competing oral histories to justify exclusive access to territorial homelands. Although both Shilluk and Dinka Padang oral histories abound with stories of conflict, interaction, and integration with each other and other ethnic groups, protracted boundary disputes did not emerge until the later part of the 20th century. This is not to suggest that  disputes did not occur before this period, but to note that when they did, they were generally much less sustained (and coordinated), and were effectively resolved at the local level. But recently due to violent clashes and political interference, that territorial disputes became an issue of significant regional and national concern[[35]](#footnote-35) | The Shiluk and Dinka communities, community leaders, youth and women | Loose of lives and displacement | * Inter-county community dialogue to reduce the violent conflict incidents * Support interstate dialogue between authorities to increase cooperation on peace building * Involve youth and women in interdependency initiatives * Strengthen conflict early warning and response system * Establish/ strengthen peace building infrastructure ( like peace committees) |
| Tensions over access to water sources and grazing land | The major cause of this is the territorial disputes and conflict between Shilluk and Padang Dinka communities on both sides of the White Nile deprived one or both to access the land and the water in the location. | Dinka communities, community leaders, youth and women | This is the major cause for conflict which end up loose of live and livelihoods. | * Strengthening the dialogue and interdependency initiatives * Build conflict sensitive peace infrastructures ( like water schemes) |
| Youth unemployment | Like most location in the state, the youth in Fashoda and Akoka town of Baillet county deprived of opportunities for education and employment. As a result they are involving in community dysfunctional activities, such as crime, conflict and the like. | Youth ( boys and girls) | Involve in conflict which end up loose of life and displacement | * Create alternative livelihood opportunity for the youth through skill training * Youth dialogue and organizing recreational events like sport for peace * Increase the participation of youth in peace building and similar community agenda |

# **Peace actors**

There are several peace actors in Malakal including UNMISS Civil Affairs, Internews Media Network, Council of Churches, Safer World, and CSOs including PaCC partners. They are eager to work with UNDP. One of the major gaps is there is no peace actor’s coordination system and there is weak system of collaboration and reinforcing efforts. As there is no active peace commission currently in Malakal, UNMISS civil affairs are waiting for the appointment so as to push the peace actor’s coordination forum. There are also three UNDP projects currently implementing in Upper Nile: Upper Nile University, Local government and Access to Justice and this gives a good opportunity for PaCC for coordinated approach.

In addition, the peace actors, particularly UNMISS, created various community structures that works on peace building and promoting social conflict. For instance, the migration conference is already created, and some conferences were conducted, and resolution drawn. UNMISS also established country commissioner’s forum that helps to coordinate and reinforce peacebuilding and security efforts in the location. Internews are working in disseminating peace building and social cohesion message through radio in Upper Nile that covers majority of the states. They have daily programs and most peace actors use this platform to disseminate peace messages.

# **Gaps and Way forward: Recommendations**

Malakal is a very unique context and a major front to determine the stability of the peace agreement and the new transitional government. It is the capital for the SPLM-IO, it has 6 cantonment area and the communities are still divided along their support on political parties and ethnic lines. So, there is enough entry point (in terms of peace building and social cohesion) for UNDP to open base in Malakal.

Major Focus area recommend:

* + 1. Majority of the peace actors and humanitarians are implementing projects in the POC and this raise concern from the government and inhabitants of the Malakal town, predominantly from Dinka ethnic group, as they think they are neglected by the intervention. So, it is good to understand these dynamics for having conflict sensitive planning before commencing major activities.
    2. The peace actors (civil affairs, human right section of UNMISS, the government and CoC), advised UNDP to combine the soft peace building and social cohesion activities with infrastructure-oriented peace building and social cohesion intervention (if budget permits). Most of the peace actors, including civil affairs, are working heavily on soft part. Some of the recommendation are:
       - There is a cultural centre in the town that civil affairs recommended renovation,
       - no youth centre in the town (youths in the town are asking for vocational skill training) …
       - water points on the place where these ethnic groups usually interacting, such as around market centres
       - as fishing is the basic activity that bring the POC and Malakal town youths together, supporting the process in also advised
    3. Youth and women focused intervention is very vital as the youth are activity participated in conflict and women suffering with the consequences. Increase the participation of women and youth in peace building process in the location will be empowering to advocate for their own cause.
    4. Social cohesion and interdependency initiatives in all location is very curtail as the communities are highly divided along political and ethnic lines.
    5. Conflict early warning and response system coupled with establishing local peace infrastructure is very important for conflict prevention and for peaceful resolution of conflicts.
    6. Supporting the migration conference and building water scheme also one of the areas that can contribute for reducing the deadly conflict along the migration route
    7. The acting DG and the cabinets speculated challenges in the transition: during and on the initial phase of the appointment of the governor, and asking for support on strengthening the attorney office to conduct awareness raising on the peace agreement to address some of the contentious issue (especially land issue). Additionally they also asked for support to strengthen the security (police) in patrolling.

1. Risks

* There is Very high expectation from the government on UNDP projects
* Dry season is coming and conflict, especially on Nuer east and migration routes are expected to be raise
* The tension during the appointment of the governor will also make the general situation unpredictable

**Annex 1:**

**Assessment duration:**

From 16- 21 November

**Team Member:**

1**.** Solomon Yimam M&E Specialist

2. Margarete Mathiang Gender analyst

**Annex 2: KII and FGD Participants**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| S. N | Name of participants | Method | Represent |
| 1 | Stephen Omondi | KII | SAADO |
| 2 | Abraham Gieth | KII | SAADO |
| 3 | Susana Kol | KII | SAADO |
| 4 | Oketa Dominic | KII | HDC |
| 5 | Michael Nyatho | KII | HDC |
| 6 | Hakim Yoanes | KII | UNYDA |
| 7 | Jemes Okoch | FGD | Youth Group (POC) |
| 8 | Rita John | FGD | Youth Group (POC) |
| 9 | Mama Achol | FGD | Youth Group (POC) |
| 10 | Khamis Maragan | FGD | Youth Group (POC) |
| 11 | Peter Ditdok Both | FGD | Youth Group (Town) |
| 12 | Yien Chuol Tut | FGD | Youth Group (Town) |
| 13 | Peter Lam | FGD | Youth Group (Town) |
| 14 | James Chuol Jock | FGD | Youth Group (Town) |
| 15 | Gabriel So Gai | KII | COC |
| 16 | Nyayup Dieth | KII | COC |
| 17 | Rebbeca Jok | KII | Former Peace Commission |
| 18 | Jimmy Okumu | KII | UNMISS CA |
| 19 | Tara | KII | UNMISS Human Right |

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