DANISH REFUGEE COUNCIL

COMPETING VULNERABILITIES

AN ASSESSMENT OF CONFLICT DYNAMICS AMONG HOST AND REFUGEE COMMUNITIES IN MABAN COUNTY, SOUTH SUDAN

Table of contents

DRC

List of Acronyms

AVR	Armed Violence Reduction
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HDC	Humanitarian Development Consortium
KII	Key Informant Interview
SPLM/A	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

DRC

Executive Summary

This report presents the results of a conflict assessment carried out in Maban County, South Sudan in October-November 2020 by the Danish Refugee Council's Peacebuilding unit (also known as Danish Demining Group – DDG). Maban County in Upper Nile State is a complex area that has a long history of conflict and is of key strategic importance in South Sudan's wars. This situation was further complicated by the arrival of refugees in 2011 from the Blue Nile State of Sudan, who were fleeing a different, but connected conflict in their own country. Today, Maban County hosts more than 150,000 refugees in its four camps of Yusuf Batil, Gendrassa, Kaya and Doro.

With the aim of understanding conflict dynamics in Maban in order to design context relevant and conflict sensitive programming, DRC carried out two conflict analyses in 2012 and 2016. The present study provides an update to the findings from the 2016 study and investigates avenues for conflict transformative and conflict sensitive programming in Maban County. The study used a qualitative approach and included focus group discussions and key informant interviews (either in person or over the phone/internet). Due to the ongoing covid-19 pandemic and other time constraints, the study privileged the opinions of humanitarian workers in Maban, in addition to refugee and host community representatives. However, a primary limitation of the study is the underrepresentation of women's voices and overall low sample size.

Since the completion of this assessment, there was an escalation of violence in Maban. Triggered by a dispute that erupted between forces in Liang at the end of November 2020, there has been a subsequent deterioration in the situation, with incidents of conflict spreading to Dangaji, Bunj and Gasmallah throughout December 2020 and January 2021. The renewed breakout of conflict has led to further displacement of populations and impeded access to humanitarian services. As these clashes occurred following the completion of data collection, the views from the KIIs and FGDs do not reflect this recent shift in dynamics.

Key findings

Conflicts between refugees and host communities continue to arise as a result of competition over land and natural resources; competition over access to services and employment brought in by the refugee response; and lingering and unaddressed negative perceptions

Access to land remains a primary frustration for both refugees and host communities and a key trigger as well as driver of conflict. Conflicts over land were partly driven by a decrease in food rations for refugee communities, which forced them to find other means of subsistence. Farming opportunities for refugees remain limited due to restricted access to land and for host communities, the use of land and its resources by refugee communities has further strained their already limited livelihoods.

Religion and 'culture' were also cited as a key point of contention and, possibly, division among refugees and host communities.

Perceived and real differences in provision of aid and services to host and refugee communities is a key source of conflict in Maban. Host communities, despite being as vulnerable as refugees, do not have the same access to services, thereby deepening grievances towards the humanitarian sector.

Tensions and conflict among Ingassana and "non-Ingassana" (esp. Uduk) communities in Blue Nile State, as a result of political rivalries and ethnic affiliation, has a major influence on intra-refugee dynamics in Maban.

Intra-refugee tensions have a palpable effect on the refugee response as well – it was reported that it is increasingly difficult to have Uduk and Ingassana refugee representatives in the same meetings.

Recommendations for operational partners in Maban

- Findings indicate that there remain a number of **knowledge gaps and points of reflection to be addressed** regarding options for peacebuilding programming in the county. Although efforts have been made to support refugee-host dialogue and other peacebuilding activities, conversations with multiple actors indicate that that they have been mostly inconsistent, unorganised and were unable to address long-term drivers of tensions and conflict. This review should be undertaken as a collective effort across agencies / actors to avoid duplication, and to ensure broad contribution to analysis concerning representation and perceived legitimacy across communities. Further analysis of the following issues would serve as an important starting point to ensure more effective, sustainable peacebuilding programming in Maban County:

  ⇒ **Ensuring effectiveness of Peace Committees and other conflict management structures:** at the time of writing this report, Maban's Peace Committees have not met since the outbreak of COVID 19. The lack of space for dialogue limits their ability to resolve conflicts before they escalate.

  ⇒ **Barriers to women's participation (including young women) in peacebuilding, and how to address them:** as noted in the 'Limitations' section, such challenges were encountered even when conducting survey in support of this report.

  ⇒ **Approaches that ensure recreational activities with intended peacebuilding outcomes are context/conflict sensitive** (including through consultative design practices) to meaningfully address long-term drivers of conflict. In all FGDs conducted with youth, they recommended that agencies engage young people from refugee and host communities in recreational activities that provide avenues for social cohesion.

  ⇒ **Tensions between host communities:** must be addressed through sustained processes that address long-term social grievances, pre-dating the arrival of refugee populations. These engagements should be owned by Mabanese and strengthen local capacities (including local institutions and civil society) to manage and deal with conflicts.

- It is necessary for agencies **to support decision-making processes to be more inclusive of women** through establishing more gender-sensitive leadership structures and creating space for women's concerns to be addressed. In a FGD with a group of women for example, participants recommended the establishment of a special entity that deals specifically with women's concerns within every block or Sheik's jurisdiction.

- To ensure meaningful youth engagement, agencies should integrate interventions that utilize a youth-centered approach whereby **community-level analysis and consultation regarding the aspirations and participation of young men and women drives programme design –** rather than 'coincidentally' targeting youth through other forms of programming. Such interventions should target beneficiaries from a wider range of youth, beyond those that are considered easier to engage with. In addition, the exclusion of young women from conceptions of 'youth' is an issue that must be addressed. These definitions have a critical bearing on youth engagement and participation in peacebuilding efforts.

- **Agencies should also introduce strong avenues to engage youth from refugee and host communities in joint income-generating activities with peacebuilding outcomes** (e.g. community works activities; building of youth centers and other community infrastructure)

- There is need to **conduct in-depth market assessments to support in designing of livelihood interventions that are relevant and appropriate to the context.** Using market assessment findings, agencies should

provide context-relevant and sustainable training opportunities for youth from refugee and host communities that factor in current market dynamics and trends moving forward. Such opportunities will ensure both intended livelihoods and peacebuilding outcomes are more likely to succeed.

- Given the prominence of land with respect to conflict dynamics and triggers, **agencies should explore opportunities for Housing, Land & Property interventions** that target both the previously displaced and returned Mabanese communities as well as the refugee communities from Blue Nile State.

- **Increase focus on rumor tracking/ management** with specific emphasis on a coordinated approach to information sharing amongst partners and a shared strategy of Communication with Communities (CWC) to ensure real-time countering of the spread of misinformation.

Recommendations for Advocacy

- Continue advocacy efforts with donors funding activities in Maban, and UN agencies and NGOs operational in the county, **to increase support for the host community.** As noted, perceived and real differences in provision of aid and services to host and refugee communities is a key source of conflict in Maban. Advocacy on this issue would be considerably strengthened if provided on a collective basis across programming agencies, drawing on community-gathered evidence and beneficiary feedback.

- Based on proposed points for further reflection and analysis outlined above, **practitioners in Maban should work to establish 'minimum standards' for peacebuilding programming that aim to address longstanding concerns regarding sustainability and relevance.** Success stories and lessons should be used to develop messaging on this issue across partners, including regarding meaningful ways to engage women and young people. Evidence sharing between agencies to inform conflict-sensitive beneficiary targeting and activity design is strongly encouraged.

Background and Objectives

South Sudan's Maban County hosts 154,575 refugees (as of October 31, 2020) in the four camps of Doro, Yusuf Batil, Gendrassa and Kaya.[1] Over 90% of refugees in South Sudan are of Sudanese origin; refugees in Maban County, for the most part, have their origins in Blue Nile State in Sudan's southeast corner, which has been embroiled in conflict since the late 1950s.[2] In 2011, the conflict between the government of Sudan and the SPLM/A-N,[3] which began in South Kordofan State, spilled into Blue Nile; this became known as the 'Two Areas' conflict.[4] It is estimated that one-fifth of Blue Nile's population fled to refugee camps in Ethiopia, South Sudan and other parts of Sudan. Ethnically, the majority of the refugee population in Maban come from the Ingassana, Uduk and Jum Jum communities.[5]

Maban County in South Sudan's Upper Nile State lies across the border from Blue Nile State in Sudan. Demographically, Maban County constitutes "ethnic Mabanese"[6] as a majority, with Dinka populations in western and northern Maban and Nuer population in the south of the county. Mabanese communities' experience of the second civil war (1983-2005) was particularly brutal due to Maban's geographic importance for the SPLA's war efforts and the significance of oil fields in Maban and neighboring counties in Upper Nile State.[7] According to the 2008 census, Maban County was home to 45,228 persons comprising mainly 'ethnic Mabanese' and some Nuer communities. This demographic composition changed considerably starting in 2011 when refugees from Sudan's Blue Nile state began arriving in Maban.
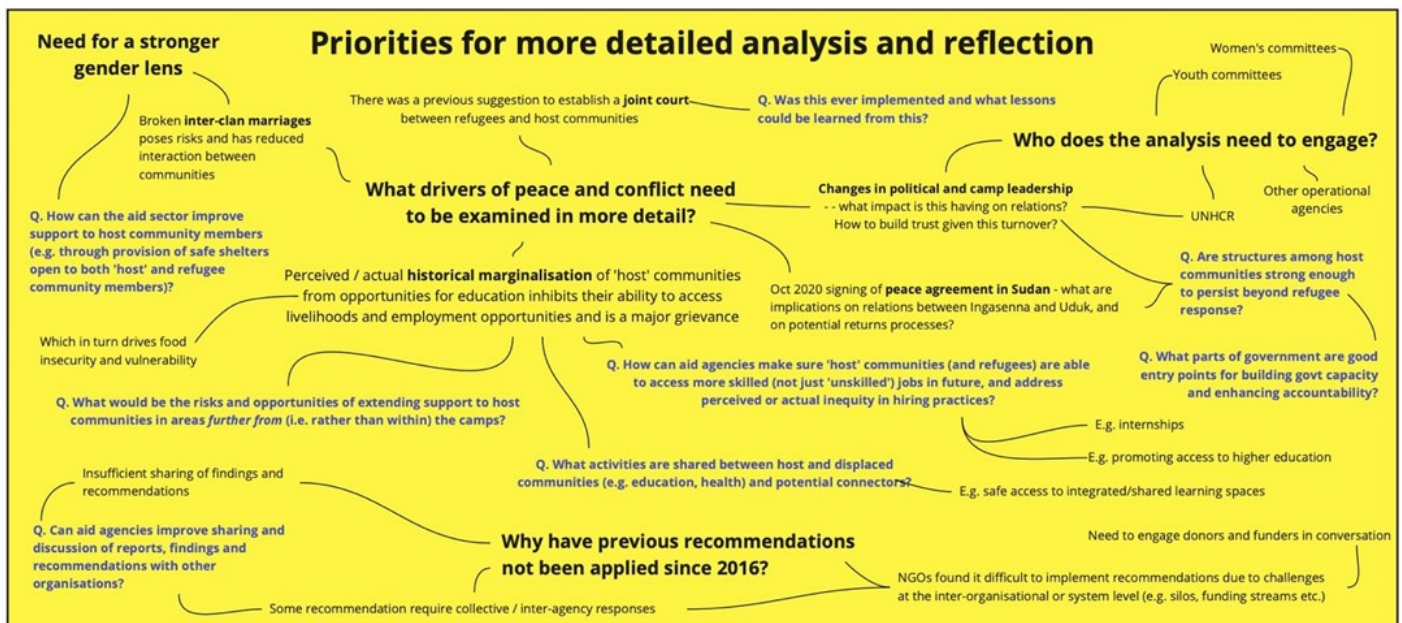
Conflict dynamics in Maban County today are not only the result of the long and complicated dynamics of war in Southern Sudan and the intricate link between resources (oil, employment, land etc.) and conflict, they are also greatly affected by conflict dynamics in Blue Nile State in Sudan and the presence and relationships among refugee populations in Maban. In an effort to implement evidence-based, conflict sensitive programming in Maban County, Danish Refugee Council (DRC) has conducted conflict and other assessments in Maban County in 2012 and 2016. This present report attempts to update DRC and partners' understanding of conflict dynamics in Maban County by investigating relationships between host communities and refugees and among the refugee population. Specifically, it builds on and updates the conflict analysis conducted in 2016[8] in a bid to arrive at context-relevant and conflict-sensitive peacebuilding and other programing in Maban County.

The specific aims of the conflict analysis are to:

- Present an overview of the main dynamics of conflict in Maban (including profile, causes, and triggers);

- Examine historical and contemporary dynamics and relationships between and among refugee and host communities

- Identify key actors and community structures involved in conflict transformation activities

- Identify key conflict transformation and conflict sensitivity recommendations for partners working in Maban

As a first step to this assessment, a roundtable discussion was held by the assessment team from DRC, with the participation of the DRC Protection team, the DRC Peacebuilding team, and national and international NGOs working in Maban (particularly Save the Children, Jesuit Refugee Services, Humanitarian Development Consortium etc). The roundtable discussion was facilitated by the Conflict Sensitivity Resource Facility (CSRF) and provided an opportunity for collective brainstorming on peace and conflict dynamics in Maban and issues of conflict-sensitivity in humanitarian response. Participants at the roundtable discussed profiles, causes and actors of conflict and peace, in addition to identifying priorities for detailed analysis and reflection.

Priorities for more detailed analysis and reflection

Need for a stronger gender lens

Broken **inter-clan marriages** poses risks and has reduced interaction between communities

There was a previous suggestion to establish a **joint court** between refugees and host communities

Q. Was this ever implemented and what lessons could be learned from this?

Women's committees

Youth committees

Q. How can the aid sector improve support to host community members (e.g. through provision of safe shelters open to both 'host' and refugee community members)?

What drivers of peace and conflict need to be examined in more detail?

Who does the analysis need to engage?

Other operational agencies

Changes in political and camp leadership - - what impact is this having on relations? How to build trust given this turnover?

UNHCR

Perceived / actual **historical marginalisation** of 'host' communities from opportunities for education inhibits their ability to access livelihoods and employment opportunities and is a major grievance

Oct 2020 signing of **peace agreement in Sudan** - what are implications on relations between Ingasenna and Uduk, and on potential returns processes?

Q. Are structures among host communities strong enough to persist beyond refugee response?

Which in turn drives food insecurity and vulnerability

Q. How can aid agencies make sure 'host' communities (and refugees) are able to access more skilled (not just 'unskilled') jobs in future, and address perceived or actual inequity in hiring practices?

Q. What parts of government are good entry points for building govt capacity and enhancing accountability?

Q. What would be the risks and opportunities of extending support to host communities in areas *further from* (i.e. rather than within) the camps?

E.g. internships

E.g. promoting access to higher education

Insufficient sharing of findings and recommendations

Q. What activities are shared between host and displaced communities (e.g. education, health) and potential connectors?

E.g. safe access to integrated/shared learning spaces

Q. Can aid agencies improve sharing and discussion of reports, findings and recommendations with other organisations?

Why have previous recommendations not been applied since 2016?

Need to engage donors and funders in conversation

NGOs found it difficult to implement recommendations due to challenges at the inter-organisational or system level (e.g. silos, funding streams etc.)

Some recommendation require collective / inter-agency responses

Online flipchart from Maban Roundtable Discussion, September 30, 2020. Courtesy CSRF

Methodology

The study is based on an exclusively qualitative methodology, combining key informant interviews (KII) and focus group discussions (FGD). A desk review was conducted using available academic and grey literature. The study team comprised DRC's Conflict Management Project Manager, DRC Maban's Peacebuilding team and the DRC Regional Conflict Analysis Coordinator. A purposive and snowball sampling method was used to identify key informants, who were interviewed either in person or over the phone or Skype. FGDs were conducted in refugee camps and among host communities by the DRC Maban team. Joint reflections around the data were conducted by the assessment team and any critical missing information was sourced appropriately. In total, 12 KII and 12 FGDs (with young men and women, elder women and men and other refugee and host community representatives) were conducted (see Annex 1 for questionnaires).

Limitations

The study's design and methodology were adversely affected by time constraints and COVID-19 restrictions around travel. A rapid conflict assessment methodology was used, which focuses on quicker data collection, snowball/convenient sampling method, and also prizes opinions of agency workers. For this particular study, a rapid assessment methodology was deemed most suitable considering time and travel constraints.

A primary limitation of the study is the time it takes to understand local dynamics, perceptions, attitudes and other factors at localized level. Due to the contracted period of data collection, the study may not address these adequately. Secondly, fewer women than men were interviewed as part of the study, including from host and refugee communities. This may be a combination of lack of adequate safe space for women to air their opinions and views and the overall sociocultural forces that may not be conducive to women's free sharing of opinions. Besides one entire FGD session that had 17 women, women made up 33% of the FGD sample, which is a major limitation of the study.

Bunj Market

Danish Refugee Council's peacebuilding work in Maban County

DRC's peacebuilding unit has worked in South Sudan since 2006, with a revamped Programme beginning in 2017. Through the Young, Empowered, Safe! (YES!) Framework, the peacebuilding programme aims to reduce motivations for violence amongst young people in high-risk contexts, foster their inclusion as active members of society, and empower these individuals as effective agents for peace within their communities. Operating in Maban County in Upper Nile State and Rubkona and Pariang Counties in Unity State, DRC takes the time to listen to the specific challenges and concerns raised by targeted Tier 1 beneficiaries (see below), and provide tailored support through conflict management activities and targeted referrals to other specifically mandated CSOs and humanitarian agencies - while also incorporating them into community platforms to foster inclusion and peaceful co-existence. The programme has four main components: intergenerational dialogue, Addressing Conflict and Resilience (ACR) workshops, Referral Case Management and Rumour Management.

A rigorous participant selection/verification process has been designed for this project, and beneficiaries are divided into three tiers:

- **Tier 1** – Youth with a history of recent detention, petty crime (theft, physical altercations) and/or violent crime.

- **Tier 2** – Family members, relatives and/or close friends of persons categorised as Tier 1. The main intention of working with Tier 2 beneficiaries is to leverage their position as persons of trust to Tier 1 beneficiaries in support of Tier 1 beneficiary integration efforts.

- **Tier 3** – Other community members including community leadership, judicial bodies and security providers. This group directly participate in activities to facilitate community ownership and leadership in efforts to integrate marginalised youth.

DRC

# About Maban County and Refugee Influx

Maban County, located in Upper Nile State, borders Blue Nile State in Sudan to the east, Longochuk County to the south and Renk and Melut Counties to the west. A semi-arid area, Maban experiences high temperatures in the dry season and extensive flooding in the wet season. The population of Maban (host community) practices agro-pastoralism, supplemented with fishing and other petty trade and wage labor activities. Crops grown include sorghum, maize, beans and groundnuts, among others and livestock include cattle, small ruminants, pigs and chicken. The only permanent river in Maban is the Yabus River, which drains into the White Nile. Bunj town is a major market in the area and also hosts the humanitarian hub from where the refugee response is coordinated. Despite the exploitation of oil around Maban, infrastructure and services remain sparse and poverty widespread.

Maban's refugee influx began in 2011 when fighting in Blue Nile State forced thousands of civilians to flee to Maban, where they were settled first in Doro camp and then in Jamam (now Kaya). The refugee influx continued at a steady pace in the months following Nov 2011 and by mid-2012 and two new camps of Batil and Gendrassa were established.[9] Whereas initially the camps comprised mixed populations, today Batil, Gendrassa and Kaya have a primarily Ingassana population and Doro camp principally Uduk.[10] Ingassana considerably outnumber other refugee ethnicities in Maban.[11] A key difference vis-à-vis displacement between the Ingassana and Uduk communities is that the former, until 2011, had never been displaced in large numbers whereas Uduk communities had experienced multiple displacements during the wars.[12] This differential experience of displacement has, allegedly, also had an impact on livelihoods and sociopolitical structures, where Ingassana communities are said to have retained many aspects of their sociopolitical organization even in a displacement context that Uduk have not.[13]

Maban County's indigenous populations (particularly 'ethnic Mabanese') have their own history of displacement, having been severely affected by the second civil war (1983 – 2005) and the conflict over Upper Nile (2013-2020). Since 2014, Maban County has been at the intersection of two interconnected conflicts: the conflict in Blue Nile and the conflict in South Sudan between the South Sudanese government and Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army-In Opposition (SPLM/A-IO). Refugees from Maban moved to Sudan and Ethiopia, returning to Maban several years later to find destitute conditions.[14] Reportedly, conditions upon return were so dire that some chose to go back to Ethiopia while others remained.[15] Whereas host communities in many, if not most, refugee hosting areas in Sub-Saharan Africa are not vastly better off in comparison to the refugees, this difference appears particularly slim in Maban's case where the conversion from refugee to host for Mabanese happened in a relatively short amount of time. This rapid role reversal has not only been difficult in tangible ways (such as food security, livelihoods and other concerns), it has also, allegedly, increased the feeling of marginalization among host communities where their needs, in comparison to those of Blue Nile refugees, are rarely addressed (with some exceptions as detailed below).
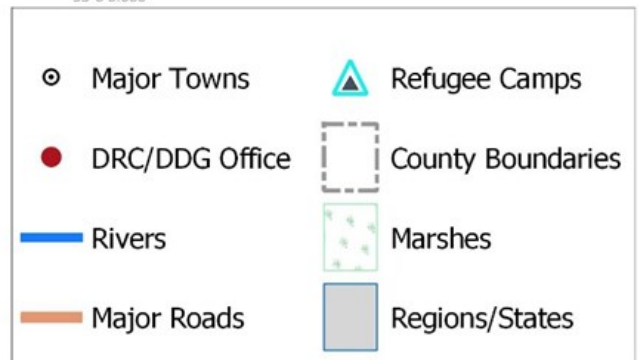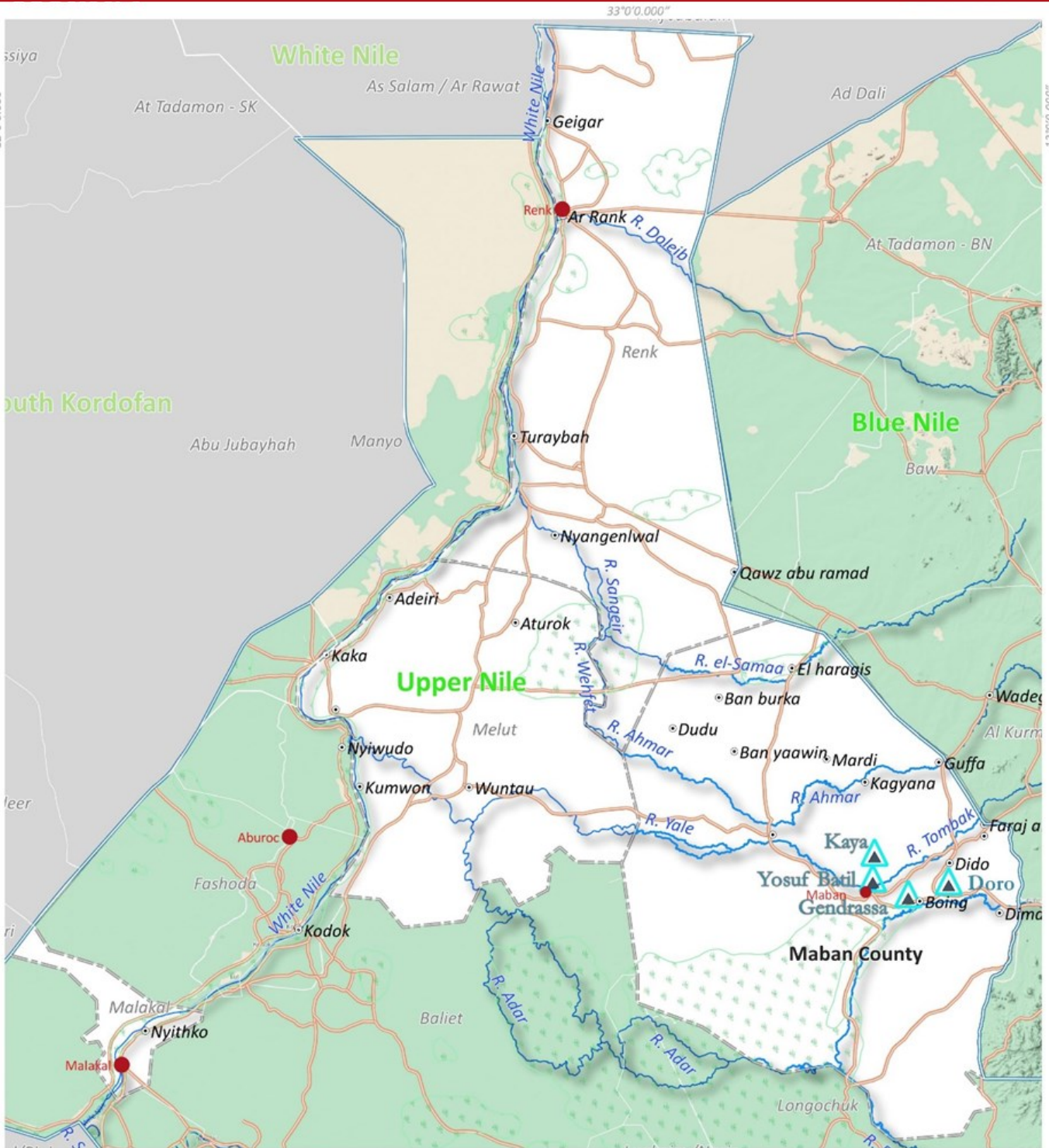
Violence and Conflict in Maban

Refugee-Host Community Conflicts

The relationship between refugees and host communities in Maban has witnessed several ups and downs. The early phase and subsequent period of the refugee influx from Blue Nile (2011) is generally remembered as a less fraught era when relationships between refugees and host communities were not tense.[16] Despite documented incidents of conflict between the two communities even in 2012,[17] the early years are remembered by interviewees as a period marked by generally convivial relationships. The deterioration of these relationships is said to have occurred in the time period between 2014 and 2016 when competition over various resources had intensified (also as a result of decrease in food rations provided to refugees) and the feeling of disenfranchisement among host communities began to worsen. Killings of both refugee and host community members occurred over 2015 and 2016 in bouts. It is estimated that between 2011 and 2016, between 50 and 90 individuals lost their lives.[18]

Before considering the main drivers of conflicts between refugees and host communities, it is key to note the **difference in relationship between Uduk and host communities** and Ingassana and host communities. The existing literature on Maban County emphasizes the alleged closer relationship between Uduk and host communities as a result of their early engagement during the refugee influx and sociocultural similarities.[19] This fact has, nonetheless, not prevented conflict from arising between Uduk refugees and host communities and conflicts around theft, unequal access to services, natural resources etc were reported.[20] However, in comparison to Uduk communities, there is an overwhelmingly negative perception toward the Ingassana community as has been previously noted.[21] Ingassana communities' larger numbers, their political

standing in Sudan, and their continued militarization (see below) even in the Maban context are some of the reasons for their unpopularity. Ingassana communities are sometimes stereotyped as 'thieves', raising fear among host communities for their assets such as livestock.[22] The Ingassana community, on the other hand, has experienced marginalization at the hands of both north and south (Sudan) – northerners have viewed them as conspirators with the South and the southerners have never fully accepted them due to their distinct social practices.[23] It is important to bear these subtle yet crucial differences in mind when evaluating conflict dynamics in the Maban context.

Conflicts between refugees and host communities arose as a result of competition over land and natural resources; competition over access to services and employment brought in by the refugee response; and lingering and unaddressed negative perceptions. First, the arrival and prolonged presence of refugees has, undoubtedly created a pressure on land, water and other natural resources. Charcoal production is a key source of income for both refugees and host communities and a large number of host and refugee community members play some role in the charcoal value chain (as producer, retailer, transporter or consumer).[24] However, access to forest resources, such as wood for shelter construction and charcoal, remains a key conflict issue between refugee and host communities as was also the case during DRC's 2012 and 2016 assessments (as well as REACH's 2016 assessment). The competition over wood has also led to massive deforestation around Maban since 2012. Conflict over access to firewood, however, is not uniform in all locations – Yusuf Batil camp, for instance, has more reported incidents of conflicts over firewood than Doro camp.[25]

As in the previous assessments, **access to land**

Refugee boy herding cows within the camp

remains a primary frustration for both refugees and host communities and a key trigger as well as driver of conflict. Conflicts over land were partly driven by a decrease in food rations for refugees, which forced them to find other means of subsistence. Farming opportunities for refugees remain limited due to restricted access to land and for host communities, the use of land and its resources by refugee communities has further strained their already limited livelihoods. Both communities blame the other for issues having to do with land – for instance, host communities note that the presence of armed Ingassana refugees on their land (typically with their livestock) prevents them from using land that belongs to them.[26] On the other hand, refugee communities also claim threats and conflicts when accessing host community land.[27] Shelter construction by both refugees and host communities (despite the change in UNHCR shelter strategy to mud and bricks) has been a key conflict trigger.[28] Lastly, reports of men and women being attacked when going to collect firewood was also reported.[29] Threats were reported to come from host communities as well as 'criminals' who operate in

groups and are sometimes armed. In one instance, a refugee was told that the grass he went to collect "belonged to Mabanese and not the refugees".[30]

Religion and 'culture' were also cited as a key point of contention and, possibly, division among refugees and host communities. For instance, Ingassana communities are majority Muslim and the fact that their location was chosen without consideration of this major difference with their Christian host community members is a point of contention.[31] At least one Ingassana community member also echoed this sentiment, noting that it was 'insensitive' of humanitarian agencies to place them in the vicinity of non-Muslims who did not share a religion or 'culture'.[32] The traditional rearing of pigs by the host communities is also a trigger of conflict especially near Ingassana camps due to prohibitions in Islamic law vis-à-vis pigs.[33]

A central issue when discussing refugee host community relationships, particularly conflict dynamics, is the unequal service provision for the two groups and the focus of the humanitarian response, in general. Among several key informants interviewed for this assessment, there

was a predominant sentiment of the equal (if not greater) vulnerability of the host community population compared to the refugees, and that the humanitarian response, mainly mandated to serve refugees, was potentially exacerbating issues between the communities. As mentioned earlier, many Mabanese communities had (have) barely recovered from their own displacement, war and other turbulent experiences when their status changed to host community, and the discrepancy in services is noticeable. According to some key informants, concerted attempts to address host community vulnerabilities was prominent only following the 2019 flooding, which affected both communities equally and organizations lobbied for support to host communities.

The **feeling of marginalization among host communities** has never been adequately addressed.[34] Whereas one national NGO (Humanitarian Development Consortium - HDC) works with the host community[35] and other humanitarian partners provided support to them during the flood of 2019, these efforts are wanting. In addition, UNHCR interventions target government structures and leadership in both refugee and host community locations in such sectors as Access to Justice, Health and Education, which target both refugee and host communities.[36] Interviewees for this assessment, however, agreed that the flood response was one of the only instances of equitable distribution of aid where even those host community members who were far from the humanitarian response were reached.[37] However, besides this particular instance, the distribution of services has been skewed in favor of refugees, which has, decidedly, increased host communities' perception of marginalization and grievances. **According to a few key informants, this unequal access to service has had an impact on the refugee operation as well** – the host community murram committee, which provides murram for the paving of access roads into and around camps, has refused to provide

murram. On the other hand, refugees also blame host communities for preventing their access to, for example, markets, where access depends on interpersonal relations between refugees and hosts.[38]

The risk of conflict between refugees and host communities was predicted in 2012 as "a perfect storm created between real need and grievance, ethnic-based polarization and militarization".[39] These sporadic incidents culminated in violent clashes between refugees and host communities in December 2016 and January 2017, a period remembered widely as the most critical time marker when describing refugee-host relations. Several competing narratives implicating both the refugee and the host communities are offered when investigating the reason for the escalation of conflict.[40] Tens of people were reportedly killed and several more injured and displaced. Refugees were, allegedly, heavily armed at the time, tilting the balance of power in their favor.[41] The South Sudan Army division in Maban is said to have not intervened due to lack of capacity. Whatever the reason behind these events, the intensity of the conflict and resulting death toll marks this period as the bleakest in refugee-host relations in Maban.

Intra-Refugee Conflicts

In addition to refugee-host conflicts, conflicts among refugee communities are also a source of recurrent tension not only for general concerns around peaceful coexistence but also for the effectiveness of the humanitarian response. **Tensions and conflict among Ingassana and "non-Ingassana" (esp. Uduk, Berta and Burun) communities in Blue Nile State, as a result of political rivalries and ethnic affiliation, has a major influence on intra-refugee dynamics in Maban County** as a result of Maban's proximity to Blue Nile and its role and instrumentalization in the war between the Government of Sudan and the SPLM-North.[42] Critically, a decisive split in 2017 in the SPLM-N along ethnic lines which pitted Ingassana and non-Ingassana civilians and generals

Sourcing grass from Gendrassa

against each other had an influential role in the intra-refugee dynamics in Maban as well.

Regardless of the perpetrator, the SPLM-N split has led not only to the deaths of several hundred civilians both in Blue Nile as well as in Maban County, but also to the hardening of attitudes among soldiers and civilians along ethnic lines.[43] This has had a palpable effect on the refugee response as well – **several key informants reported that it has become increasingly difficult, if not impossible, to have Uduk and Ingassana refugee representatives in the same meetings.** Interviewees report the refusal of refugees from the two sides to come together for meetings but also that taking people from one camp can "cause chaos" due to the deteriorated relationship between the two communities.[44] There is a pervasive sentiment among humanitarian workers (especially those contacted for this study) that the politics in Blue Nile have a palpable effect on the dynamics of refugee relationships in Maban making it challenging to build sustainable intra-refugee peaceful coexistence.

Adding to this complexity is the recent (since December 2019) further splintering of the Sudanese military factions and rivalries within the Ingassana communities. Clans and sub-clans with sympathies to different military leaders has reportedly increased insecurity in the Yusuf Batil and Gendrassa camps in the recent year. Desertions and dissent in some factions has resulted in further militarization of the camps, which has been a continued source of insecurity in the area (see below). As previously recommended, despite the sensitivity around this issue, the need to address militarization and recruitment for armed groups in the camps needs to be addressed by the government and humanitarian actors in a sensible and sensitive way.[45]

Militarization of Camps

The militarization of civilian space in Maban is not a recent development, having been reported during DRC and REACH's assessments in 2015 and 2016 respectively. **Arming of militias in Maban by the different governments in Sudan and South**

Sudan in addition to continued fluid dynamics relating to military allegiances have, over the years, given rise to an environment of rapid changes to security.[46] Among the camps, Batil and Gendrassa have consistently remained problematic due to the presence and activities of armed actors (in 2015/6 and now). However, according to some key informants, all camps have some form of militarization and ongoing recruitment of men, women, boys and girls. Women and girls, who are supposedly recruited for chores such as cooking and cleaning at the barracks, reportedly face various protection issues at the barracks.[47] There are also alleged checkpoints within the camps, manned by refugees, adding to the general insecurity of the area[48] Despite attempts by humanitarian agencies to address active recruitment (of both genders) through messaging and awareness raising, the continued militarization and the tenuous nature of the humanitarian-civilian environment in the refugee setting remains a cause for concern in Maban.

Peace agreement with the Government of Sudan and implications for Maban County

In mid-2020, with the aim of addressing long-running and deep-rooted conflicts, Sudan's power-sharing government signed a peace agreement with key rebel groups, including SPLM-N (Agar).[49] However, not all factions have supported this decision,[50] intensifying tensions between Ingassana and non-Ingassana (Uduk) refugees. Naturally, the signing of the peace agreement has critical implications for the Ingassana communities in Maban, with several interviewees speculating on a potential return to Blue Nile in the near future.

However, what this peace agreement and the continuing differences of the Uduk and other minority communities means for refugee return to Blue Nile remains to be seen. In addition, any speculations regarding return of Ingassana refugees need to be cautious and grounded in analysis, given the dearth of markets, infrastructure and services in Blue Nile and the

extent of damage in the state from the decades of war.[51] Some interviewees interviewed for this study believe that these speculations are not realistic given the discrepant services for citizens of Blue Nile in their own country versus in South Sudan. A 'realistic' and barefaced analysis of the situation would, according to some interviewees, make it obvious that refugees from Blue Nile receive greater benefits and some semblance of 'normalcy' – i.e., food for their families and education for their children – through humanitarian partners in Maban.[52]

Host Community and Refugee Youth: Demographic Challenges

Youth from both the host and refugee communities face particular constraints in Maban County (as in many parts of Sub-Saharan Africa). Young people's involvement in theft, crime, armed violence and other incidents stems from a complex set of reasons with great variability across contexts. Youth are also exceedingly susceptible to political manipulation and ethnic instrumentalization, and their engagement in violent conflict draws from context-specific political and socioeconomic factors.[53] **In Maban, young people from both the host and refugee communities face challenging circumstances in their respective communities.** For instance, refugee youth are a primary target for recruitment in armed groups in Maban refugee camps given their historical role as key actors in conflicts.

Host community youth in Maban share some similarities with refugee youth in their shared displacement experiences and the overall experience of the war in Sudan/South Sudan. However, a principle factor of host community youth discontent is the lack of employment opportunities and the politics of employment in the Maban refugee response.[54] The events of July 2018, when youth in Maban staged a demonstration to protest NGO and UN recruitment practices, an event that turned violent

Sourcing grass from Gendrassa

and resulted in injuries and destruction, was a low point in this discontent.[55] Humanitarian compounds were looted, facilities and vehicles damaged and operations were suspended and humanitarian staff relocated as a result of this incident. It is said that while the purpose of the demonstration was largely peaceful, the protest was instrumentalized by influential elites in Maban. Although this one-time incident in 2018 has since not been repeated, similar incidents in Renk County have been reported, which has been a cause for concern among some humanitarians in Maban.[56]

A primary challenge facing Mabanese youth is the allocation of humanitarian jobs – even those that do not require specialized skills – to South Sudanese from other parts of the county. This is an added grievance for Maban not having adequate representation in the national government and therefore, Mabanese perceiving themselves not to be considered a priority. According to one key informant, unfounded stereotypes against ethnic Mabanese pointing out their 'incompetence' is one of the reasons for the recruitment of other South Sudanese ethnicities in the humanitarian operation in the country.[57] Maban County continues to suffer from a lack of quality education and job opportunities, which is sometimes seen as a 'conspiracy' by humanitarian agencies to keep education levels in Maban low so as to favor the recruitment of South Sudanese workers from other areas. Given that the humanitarian operation is one of the main employers in Maban, the inability to find individuals with skills and adequate education is a major challenge.[58] Furthermore, the lack of English-speaking skills and education, especially for those Mabanese returnees who were educated in Ethiopia, allegedly prevents them from acquiring jobs in the sector.[59]

For refugee youth, similar problems persist. Despite the marginally better education provided through the refugee response, refugee youth do not feel that they have adequate skills and vocational training to be employable.[60] Not only are youth sidelined by elders from key decision-making processes, when it comes to community dynamics, they are also 'idle' with little or nothing to do. Limited learning and business opportunities – a grievance similar to the Mabanese host community youth – prevent youth from supporting their families and having tangible activities that may prevent their involvement in violent or other conflictual behaviors.[61]

Other Conflict Triggers

Theft

During the assessment several thefts were reported by refugees and host communities with both communities blaming each other at times. Interviewees from Doro Refugee Camp reported that gang groups that commit theft are active in the camp, who, given their location within the camp are protected by humanitarian principles.[62] These groups were reported to often attack women and other people around market places within the camp, thereby being a key source of insecurity. It was also alleged that the thieves have a network with members from both refugee and host communities, thereby contributing to each community blaming the other.[63] A host community representative, on the other hand, claimed that theft leads to condemnation in their community and, thus, in their opinion most thefts were being conducted by refugees who do not have similar cultural sanctions against theft.[64]

Rumors and 'blame game'

A critical issue noted by some humanitarian workers in the course of this assessment was that there is a tendency of blaming 'the other' in Maban, where refugees blame hosts – for issues such as theft or land – and hosts blame refugees. Stereotypes and negative perceptions held by each community towards the other[65] also have an exacerbating effect on this 'blame game'. Whereas this tendency can be considered natural or expected in an area of deprivation where both communities have their vulnerabilities, the unequal provision of services (rather, the lack of programs for host communities) has a detrimental effect on this blaming.

A few humanitarian workers also commented on the 'rumor mill' in Maban and the potential for these rumors to exacerbate or create tensions. The rumor mill was noted by at least one humanitarian worker to be instrumental in the events of July 2018 when the peaceful demonstration against

NGOs turned violent.[66] Rumors are also recently circulating in light of protests taking place in Renk where humanitarian organizations are under attack, mainly by youth, for their recruitment policies. Rumors about a similar uprising in Maban, harkening back to the events of 2018, emerged.[67] Whereas these are rumors, the potential for these to escalate remains viable.

Tensions among different host communities.

Historical grievances that can be traced back to the 1990s especially between the Banashawa and other Mabanese continue to affect peaceful co-existence in Maban. Perceptions that the Mabanese from Banashawa County have close historical links with the Nuer and are 'outsiders' create divides that are very eminent. These grievances are often manipulated by leaders and used as a means for pollical mobilisation and recruitment, and contributes to the factional disputes between the community, military and security actors. These disputes will likely persist and, indeed escalate if not addressed. The clashes in December 2020 and January 2021, for example, although triggered by a dispute between the military forces in Liang, was sustained due to the deeply rooted and unresolved tensions between the communities.

Conflict Resolution

Peacebuilding efforts, particularly by external partners, in Maban tend to be described as informal, inconsistent and unorganized.[68] Disputes within and between communities is usually resolved through the multi-step judicial system, with customary courts playing a key role in arbitrating civil cases.[69] Other mechanisms for conflict resolution in Maban include the Chief Forum, which consists of host community and refugee leaders who jointly address community disputes.[70] UNHCR has conducted targeted peacebuilding initiatives bringing the leadership from the refugee community and local authorities from the host community together to discuss

specific topics.[71] Organizations working in Maban have also provided training in conflict resolution and legal aid mechanisms. Whereas the legal aid and judicial system, through support from external partners, seems to be functioning relatively well (although, with its issues) and appears to be an appropriate modality for addressing disputes, conflict transformation processes and addressing causes of conflicts between and within communities remains wanting. Efforts to address tensions in Maban have also been done in the past through the reactivation of joint Peace Committees, composed of refugee and host community members, facilitated by UNHCR, NGO partners and the South Sudan Commission for Refugee Affairs.[72]

Efforts at conflict resolution in Maban, however, take a remedial rather than a preventive approach and this, according to some interviewees of this assessment, is a central shortcoming of conflict transformation or peacebuilding. Solutions to emerging conflict are found on a one-off basis with no concerted attempt at addressing long-term issues in a dedicated way. Exceptions to this exist with some NGOs implementing social cohesion activities, such as HDC and DRC. Unaddressed conflicts between these communities and between different refugee communities can potentially (as they have in the past) turn violent. They also have the potential to disrupt or impede humanitarian aid and related activities; as was noted by a number of interviewees, the inability to have Uduk and Ingassana communities in the same room has critical implications for a number of activities, including related to protection and peacebuilding.

Youth and peacebuilding

The space for youth in peacebuilding and conflict transformation processes remains, unsurprisingly, constrained. 'Youth' in this context, generally speaking, encompasses young men and rarely young women.[73] The exclusion of young women from conceptions of 'youth' is an issue that must

be highlighted for agencies working in Maban, especially those looking to increase meaningful youth participation. Young women's marital status also has a bearing on their classification as 'youth' – married women are not categorized as 'youth', regardless of age. These definitions have a critical bearing on youth engagement and participation in peacebuilding efforts.

According to interviewees, peace-related discussions in the refugee communities occurs mostly among elders, with marginal effort at meaningfully engaging youth.[74] Not only is there a lack of social space for youth, there is also a noticeable dearth of physical space for youth to congregate for activities. In Doro, for instance, there is only one youth center, which is the only initiative targeting youth. Youth also feel that the lack of quality education, vocational training skills and job opportunities are some of the main reasons for their involvement in negative social behaviors.[75] Although there are recreational activities, such as sports and music, that bring together young people (both from refugee and host communities), these do not generally address longer-term issues for youth such as access to employment and skills building.

The constrained space for youth engagement is also a result of a particular sub-section of young people that is regularly engaged by NGOs for various activities.[76] This group of youth tends to dominate various NGO-related projects and activities that target youth and are generally more proficient in engaging agencies. The tendency of NGOs to engage these youth means that other youth groups get left behind and youth activities may not be inclusive in their action.

Conclusion: Conflict dynamics, conflict sensitivity and the way forward in Maban

> ## *"You can't address conflict with a person who has an empty stomach"*[77]

The findings of this conflict assessment in Maban County highlight some of the pervasive issues between refugees and host communities and among refugees, which were recorded in each conflict assessment since 2012 (including those conducted by UNHCR and REACH). Conflict dynamics between host communities and refugees stem from each community's own history of war and displacement and the intersection of these experiences in a resource-constrained, insecure, politicized and highly complex environment. Refugees from Blue Nile arrived in Maban at a time when Mabanese communities were still in the midst of their own conflict and displacement experience (within the Upper Nile Region), which has witnessed complex, bloody and seemingly unending conflict for decades. In such a scenario, the refugee influx into Maban from Blue Nile starting in 2011 not only led to an imbalance in population figures (where refugees outnumbered Mabanese), it also led to growing feelings of marginalization and disenfranchisement as a result of the skewed response by humanitarian actors.

Previous assessments by DRC (and others) found that conflicts in Maban County stemmed not only from proximate triggers such as access to land, resources (including those provided by the humanitarian response) and theft, but that conflicts were equally a result of differential experiences of displacement and underlying grievances. The current assessment found some of the same dynamics, causes and triggers of conflict. In addition, the impact of the politics and dynamics within Blue Nile (and through the lens of the larger war in Sudan/South Sudan) between communities

on the relationships within the camps was noteworthy. Intra-refugee conflict dynamics are directly influenced by dynamics in Blue Nile and, at present, tensions over the peace agreement signed in Sudan are reflected in local conflict dynamics in Maban as well. Militarization in the camps, also reported in 2016, is considered a key concern for protection (especially of women and girls) as well as security of the area. Politicization of grievances, among refugee and host communities, serves to further exacerbate tensions.

The humanitarian sector in Maban, despite playing an essential role in providing life-saving services and fulfilling material and non-material needs of communities, has been questioned for conflict sensitivity in its response. Crucially, it was accused of worsening and creating tensions between refugees and host communities by a number of interviewees. Even today, allegedly, services within the refugee camps far exceed those available to host communities, a noticeable difference even for those working in the humanitarian response. Refugees are said to have better access to health, education and other facilities while Mabanese communities, who only recently converted from refugees to hosts, do not enjoy the same benefits despite sometimes being classified as worse off than the refugees.[78] In the course of this assessment, this differential treatment despite similar economic conditions was also noted by some refugees who noted that "living conditions of the hosts were equally as poor… (and) most agencies didn't perceive Mabanese as 'hosts' but more as just 'local communities' who didn't need any form of assistance".[79]

Whereas competing grievances and self-assessment of vulnerability are not reliable indices, these sentiments among refugee and host

populations in Maban have critical implications for a conflict sensitive humanitarian response. For instance, the revised UNHCR shelter strategy, which mitigated conflicts between communities over wood/timber from the forest, is a step in that direction. However, understanding community histories and dynamics requires significant time investment in order to build a conflict-sensitive social cohesion strategy that is preventive from the beginning, rather than reactive; addressing conflict, trauma and other deep-seated issues calls for a community-centered, collaborative and proactive approach, one that accounts for intersecting histories of war and displacement, perceived grievances over access to aid and services, and a bottom-up, inclusive process for building peace in a fraught context.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Operational Partners in Maban

- Findings indicate that there remain a number of **knowledge gaps and points of reflection to be addressed** regarding options for peacebuilding programming in the county. Although efforts have been made to support refugee-host dialogue and other peacebuilding activities, conversations with multiple actors indicate that that they have been mostly inconsistent, unorganised and were unable to address long-term drivers of tensions and conflict. This review should be undertaken as a collective effort across agencies / actors to avoid duplication, and to ensure broad contribution to analysis concerning representation and perceived legitimacy across communities. Further analysis of the following issues would serve as an important starting point to ensure more effective, sustainable peacebuilding programming in Maban County:

  ⇒ **Ensuring effectiveness of Peace Committees and other conflict management structures:** at the time of writing this report, Maban's Peace Committees have not met since the outbreak of COVID 19. The lack of space for dialogue limits their ability to resolve conflicts before they escalate.

  ⇒ **Barriers to women's participation (including young women) in peacebuilding, and how to address them:** as noted in the 'Limitations' section, such challenges were encountered even when conducting survey in support of this report.

  ⇒ **Approaches that ensure recreational activities with intended peacebuilding outcomes are context/conflict sensitive** (including through consultative design practices) to meaningfully address long-term drivers of conflict. In all FGDs conducted with youth, they recommended that agencies engage young people from refugee and host communities in recreational activities that provide avenues for social cohesion.

  ⇒ **Tensions between host communities:** must be addressed through sustained processes that address long-term social grievances, pre-dating the arrival of refugee populations. These engagements should be owned by Mabanese and strengthen local capacities (including local institutions and civil society) to manage and deal with conflicts.

- It is necessary for agencies to **support decision-making processes to be more inclusive of women** through establishing more gender-sensitive leadership structures and creating space for women's concerns to be addressed. In a FGD with a group of

women for example, participants recommended the establishment of a special entity that deals specifically with women's concerns within every block or Sheik's jurisdiction.

- To ensure meaningful youth engagement, agencies should integrate interventions that utilize a youth-centered approach whereby **community-level analysis and consultation regarding the aspirations and participation of young men and women drives programme design** – rather than 'coincidentally' targeting youth through other forms of programming. Such interventions should target beneficiaries from a wider range of youth, beyond those that are considered easier to engage with. In addition, the exclusion of young women, from conceptions of 'youth' is an issue that must be addressed. These definitions have a critical bearing on youth engagement and participation in peacebuilding efforts.

- **Agencies should also introduce strong avenues to engage youth from refugee and host communities in joint income-generating activities with peacebuilding outcomes** (e.g. community works activities; building of youth centers and other community infrastructure)

- There is need to **conduct in-depth market assessments to support in designing of livelihood interventions that are relevant and appropriate to the context.** Using market assessment findings, agencies should provide context-relevant and sustainable training opportunities for youth from refugee and host communities that factor in current market dynamics and trends moving forward. Such opportunities will ensure both intended livelihoods and peacebuilding outcomes are more likely to succeed.

- Given the prominence of land with respect

to conflict dynamics and triggers, **agencies should explore opportunities for Housing, Land & Property interventions** that target both the previously displaced and returned Mabanese communities as well as the refugee communities from Blue Nile State.

- **Increase focus on rumor tracking/ management** with specific emphasis on a coordinated approach to information sharing amongst partners and a shared strategy of Communication with Communities (CWC) to ensure real-time countering of the spread of misinformation.

Recommendations for Advocacy

- Continue advocacy efforts with donors funding activities in Maban, and UN agencies and NGOs operational in the county, to increase support for the host community. As noted, perceived and real differences in provision of aid and services to host and refugee communities is a key source of conflict in Maban. Advocacy on this issue would be considerably strengthened if provided on a collective basis across programming agencies, drawing on community-gathered evidence and beneficiary feedback.

- Based on proposed points for further reflection and analysis outlined above, practitioners in Maban should work to establish 'minimum standards' for peacebuilding programming that aim to address longstanding concerns regarding sustainability and relevance. Success stories and lessons should be used to develop messaging on this issue across partners, including regarding meaningful ways to engage women and young people. Evidence sharing between agencies to inform conflict-sensitive beneficiary targeting and activity design is strongly encouraged.

Annex I – Questionnaires

Focus Group Discussion Questionnaire

1. How would you describe the situation in X location?

2. What is the nature of current relations among refugees in X location? *Probe for information on peace and conflict dynamics within the refugee population. Probe for whether particular groups are considered spoilers.*

3. What is the nature of current relations between refugees and host communities in X location? *Probe for connectors and dividers.*

4. What is the nature of current relations among host community members in X location?

5. How is the security situation in this area? What are the main conflicts and sources of insecurity?

6. What are the main reasons for conflicts?

7. Who are main actors involved in conflict(s)?

8. Which areas experience more conflict and why?

9. What are the factors that make the conflict(s) worse or improve the situation?

10. What consequences do these conflicts have on boys/girls/men/women?

11. What is the role of youth in conflicts? Are youth part of community decision-making/conflict management processes? If yes/no, how?

12. Who resolves conflicts in this area? Probe for importance of certain individuals or groups.

13. Who are communities more likely to approach for conflict resolution? *Probe for role of traditional leaders and formal systems.*

14. Looking at different ways of resolving conflict, can you talk about the advantages and disadvantages of the different systems? (e.g., police, traditional elders, etc.) *Probe for community trust in different justice actors and why people approach some and avoid others.*

15. How can relationships between communities be improved? What would be necessary (socially, economically, politically) for that to happen? *(Probes: How can our project support the role of actors promoting peace and reduce the influence of those promoting violence? What project interventions will have the greatest impacts for social cohesion?)*

Key Informant Interview Questionnaire

1. How is the security situation in the area? In your opinion/knowledge, do people generally feel safe? Why/why not?

2. What are the main conflict issues in the project focus areas? *(types of conflict).*

3. What are the main causes of conflict? *(based on response, interviewer should probe for each).*

4. What are the main factors that trigger or worsen conflicts in project areas?

5. How does the conflict affect (or is influenced by) women/ girls differently to men/ boys?

6. What is the relationship between different communities living in project focus area? *(probe for intra-community/intercommunity/ethnic issues).*

7. What kinds of services are available to refugees/ host communities? What are the main differences in services available?

8. Has this led to any issues in the past year or two?

9. Is there competition over resources, including employment, between refugees and host communities AND among refugee populations? *(probe for which type of resources, what kinds of livelihoods/employment).*

10. What are the effects of this competition (if relevant)?

11. When people need help (on security/conflict matters), who do they approach? Who do they approach for other issues (e.g. SGBV)?

12. How are conflicts usually resolved and by whom? *(probe for formal and informal mechanisms, including traditional and religious leaders).*

13. Are there any formal or informal mechanisms/ forums that promote dialogue and discussion in the camps? Between refugees and host communities? How do you see their relevance and effectiveness?

14. Are there particular individuals/authorities/ bodies that the communities trust more than others? Why?

15. What can contribute to positive relationship building between refugees and host communities?

Endnotes

1. *UNHCR Refugee Statistics as of Oct 31, 2020: https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/83064*

2. *Small Arms Survey (SAS), 2020. Spilling Over: Conflict Dynamics in and around Sudan's Blue Nile State 2015-2019.*

3. *Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army - North*

4. *SAS, 2020 ibid. It is beyond the scope of this report to detail the dynamics of the Two Areas conflict. Readers are encouraged to refer to the SAS report cited here.*

5. *Danish Refugee Council / Danish Demining Group (2012). Displacement, disharmony and disillusion: Understanding host-refugee tensions in Maban County, South Sudan*

6. *Although the paper refers to the population of Maban as 'ethnic Mabanese', this term is considered narrow as it does not account for the multitude groups and ethnographic distinctions among various sub-groups in Maban.*

7. *Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC), 2013. Oil investment and conflict in Upper Nile State, South Sudan. Brief 48. https://www.bicc.de/uploads/tx_bicctools/BICC_brief_48.pdf*

8. *DRC, 2016. Conflict and cohesion in Maban: Towards positive refugee/host community relations.*

9. *Tiller, S & Healy, S. 2013. Have we lost the ability to respond to refugee crises? The Maban response. Humanitarian Exchange: Special Feature – South Sudan at a crossroads*

10. *Whereas we use these names in the report, it is crucial to note that "the Ingassana" do not call themselves Ingassana, and "the Uduk" do not call themselves Uduk. These ethnonyms (or exonyms) were imposed by outsiders such as the British colonizers. See James, Wendy. 1979. 'Kwanim Pa: The Making of the Uduk People: An Ethnographic Study of Survival in the Sudan–Ethiopian Borderlands. Clarendon Press. (Referenced in SAS, 2020)*

11. *A number of other communities such as Funj, Fur, Nuba, Balila, Birga and others also live in Maban. The primary concerns for the purpose of this report are dynamics between Ingassana and Uduk.*

12. *DRC / DDG, 2012. ibid*

13. *DRC / DDG, 2012. ibid*

14. *KII, Nov 25, 2020*

15. *KII, Nov 4, 2020*

16. *FGD, Doro Refugee Camp, Nov 5, 2020; FGD with women, Genderessa Refugee Camp, Nov 19, 2020*

17. *DRC / DDG, 2012 ibid*

18. *REACH, 2016. Conflict and Tensions Between Communities around Gendrassa and Yusif Batil Camps, Maban County.*

19. *DRC / DDG, 2012; DRC, 2016 ibid*

20. *FGD with refugee leaders, Doro, Nov 5, 2020*

21. *DRC / DDG, 2012 ibid*

22. *FGD with host community, Batil, Nov 9, 2020; KII Nov 19, 2020*

23. *DRC / DDG, 2012 ibid*

24. *Relief International and UNHCR, 2019. Charcoal Value Chain Assessment in Greater Maban, Northern Upper Nile State, Republic of South Sudan*

25. *KII, Nov 11, 2020; Kaya camp generally registers fewer such conflicts due to its relative distance from host communities. In addition, Doro's location near the Humanitarian Hub and near densely-populated host community area may also explain lower levels of conflict. Lastly, since it is a swampy area, Ingassana refugees do not herd livestock around Doro, which could be another reason for few conflicts.*

26. *FGD with host community, Batil, Nov 9, 2020*

27. *FGD with women, Gendrassa Nov 19, 2020*

28. *KII Nov 11, 2020*

29. *FGD with youth, Doro Nov 4, 2020*

30. *FGD with women, Gendrassa, Nov 19, 2020*

31. *FGD with host community, Batil, Nov 9, 2020*

32. *KII with camp leader, Batil, Nov 17, 2020*

33. *FGD with refugees, Doro, Nov 5, 2020*

34. *Several key interviewees*

35. *In addition to DRC / DDG*

36. *Meeting with UNHCR in Maban, Nov 30, 2020*

37. *KII, Nov 17, 2020*

38. *FGD with youth, Doro Nov 4, 2020*

39. *DRC / DDG, 2012 ibid*

40. *https://nubareports.org/sudan-insider-tensions-continue-in-maban-refugee-camp/; https://www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/maban-fight-death-toll-rises-to-32-in-south-sudan; UNHCR Dec 2016, South Sudan Regional Update; KIIs and FGDs conducted for this assessment; see also SAS, 2020 for the role of proxy militias in this conflict*

41. *KII, Nov 18, 2020*

42. *See SAS, 2020 for a detailed analysis of the Blue Nile Conflict and influence on Maban*

43. *SAS, 2020 ibid*

44. *KIIs Nov 12, 16, 19, 2020*

45. *UNHCR & REACH, 2015. Mapping of Tensions and Disputes between Refugees and Host Community in Gendrassa, Maban County.*

46. *See SAS, 2020 for further details. Of note among these groups is the Maban Defence Forces. Pg. 31*

47. *KIIs Nov 16, 17, 2020.*

48. *KIIs*

49. *https://www.reuters.com/article/us-sudan-darfur-idUSKBN25R14Y*

50. *https://issafrica.org/iss-today/all-eyes-on-sudans-peace-deal-with-armed-groups*

51. *http://archive.irinnews.org/multimedia/BlueNile/*

52. *KII, Nov 20, 2020*

53. *Abbink, J. 2005. Being young in Africa: the politics of despair and renewal. In Vanguard or vandals: youth, politics and conflict in Africa. Pgs. 1-33.*

54. *Several KIIs*

55. *USAID, 2018. South Sudan Crisis Factsheet #10. Fiscal Year 2018. https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/south_sudan_cr_fs10_08-08-2018.pdf*

56. *https://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/unmiss-peacekeepers-evacuate-humanitarian-workers-under-threat-renk; several KIIs*

57. *KII, Oct 18, 2020*

58. *KII Nov 11, 2020*

59. *KII, Nov 25, 2020*

60. *FGD with youth, Kara Nov 11, 2020*

DRC

61.   *FGD with youth, Doro, Nov 4, 2020*

62.   *FGD with youth, Doro Nov 4, 2020*

63.   *KII, Batil, Nov 20, 2020*

64.   *KII, Nov 25, 2020*

65.   *Due to the nature of this report, some observations, such as this, can be considered generalizations, and rightfully so. Opinions can rarely, if ever, be 100% shared in such a context.*

66.   *KII, Nov 19, 2020*

67.   *KII Nov 11, 2020*

68.   *Several KIIs*

69.   *KII, Nov 19, 2020*

70.   *KII Nov 23, 2020*

71.   *Meeting with UNHCR, Nov 30, 2020*

72.   *IRRI, 2016 ibid*

73.   *Reflections from DRC staff in Maban*

74.   *FGD with youth, Doro Nov 4, 2020*

75.   *FGD with youth, Kaya Nov 11, 2020*

76.   *Reflections from DRC staff in Maban*

77.   *KII, Nov 23, 2020*

78.   *Various KIIs*

79.   *FGD Refugee Community Leaders, Doro. Nov 5, 2020*