

File



OPERATION LIFELINE SUDAN
(SOUTHERN SECTOR)

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INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM

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From: Jennifer Johnson/ RPO Nasir
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Information section

Date: 19 March

Subject: Assessment report of Ulang Displaced

On 3 March, the village of Ulang and the surrounding areas was reportedly attacked by the Lua Nuer, fighting for grazing land with the Jekain Nuer on the north and south sides of the Sobal. The situation quickly deteriorated and the majority of the people of Ulang and the villages upstream towards Nasir were evacuated with a large portion of the population fleeing to Nasir and the villages upstream to the Ethiopian border. Reports from the RASS officials in Ulang arriving to Nasir and from RASS Nasir have said that some 14,000 may be in the area.

In order to confirm these reports, the UN and NGOs in the town of Nasir decided to undertake an assessment on 14/15 and 16th of March. The security situation in the area has meant that river travel for expats is restricted west of the Nasir area, therefore, the assessment reached only those villages of Torpot, Ketbeck, Nordeng, Panagyang, Nor, Nyriew, Woyni and Nasir itself as RASS reported that many people had settled in these areas.

I. Nordeng

Nordeng is a village some 7 minutes by boat on the south bank where the SPLA Command has recommended that the Ulang and other displaced settle. After arriving in the village, it was determined that many of the native people from Nordeng had evacuated and that only some 60 people from Ulang were resting there. Walking away from the village towards Nasir, the assessment team found another 250 people staying with their cattle along the river. The condition of the majority of these people was relatively good with many cattle observed. In addition, many of the displaced had managed to salvage their household goods and were carrying food stocks and shelter materials.

II. Torpot

Again, some 350 people observed here were resting with cattle and seemed in fair shape. The displaced appear to be occupying the empty tukels of permanent residents who have either evacuated or left with their own cattle to other areas east for grazing purposes (so we were told). Some food stocks seen and again people appeared to have household goods.

III. Panagyang:

Approximately 300 people observed, mainly woman and children with some young men to care for the large amount of cattle. Same situation as above.

IV. Ketbeck:

Approximately 300-400 people observed, again with cattle and household goods. The condition of the people fair but the impression is that these displaced are not planning to stay in this area.

V. Nor/Nyriew

Roughly 1,000 people observed. Again the impression is that these people were temporarily occupying previous residents homes and were planning to move with their cattle.

VI. Nasir

A headcount was undertaken in Nasir town on 16 March. The UN requested that RASS Ulang and RASS Nasir gather all people from the town area who had been displaced by the fighting. This methodology was discussed with RASS and they were given the option of a tukel to tukel method of counting displaced or, the alternative, that of gathering together the displaced to the centretown football field. RASS chose the latter method, and were given as much time as necessary. It should be noted that the UN was expecting a larger number through this method. In all 647 people were counted in the field (perhaps there are not so many people residing in Nasir?). Another 450 were allowed for the feeding centre.

The feeding centre started to be a resting place for the very vulnerable, mainly elderly and disabled, on about 12 March. The people seen here were in very bad shape due to the trek from Ulang and many appeared to have chronic diseases. (It appears that these people have been sick for a very long time and a decision will have to be made about continuing feeding for a long period). Due to the immediate need, UNICEF and WFP reopened the feeding centre, supplying 700 grams of cereals, oil and pulses per person per day plus HEP. UNICEF invited the CMA nutritionist evacuated from Ulang to manage the feeding as no NGO available for this work and UNICEF unable to manage on her own with all other programmes and assessments underway. CMA nutritionist arrived 19 March and is currently screening and registering the displaced.

Conclusion:

In total RASS, WFP and UNICEF agreed on a figure of some 6,000 displaced. This would mean that the majority of all people from the Ulang area have arrived and are in the Nasir area and beyond. It should be noted that some of the population are said to have settled inland at Gai, a village some 5-7 hours walk away, however this area was not assessed.

As noted above, the situation seems fluid with a considerable influx from upstream towards Ulang. However, it appears that the majority of this population will continue to move east. Some of this movement could may be normal be due to seasonal movements of cattle towards grazing land, however the population appears to be moving in blocks of villages and passing through Nasir towards the eastern end of the Sobat and many are carrying arms. Those interviewed stated that they would return to Ulang and other villages should the situation stabilize. It is difficult to tell at this time what will happen as Ulang town has been burned to the ground from fighting and villagers seem nervous about returning. If the rains start early and the SPLA assures the people that the Lau have retreated we may see the return of these people within one month. If not, it is difficult to gauge where the displaced will settle as Nasir administration has made it quite clear that the people are not welcome to stay in the immediate town area. WFP has already began the delivery of food for the estimated 6,000 displaced. (Airdrops commenced on 20 March). However, WFP is faced with the problem of physically delivering to these people as they are scattered and are continually moving.

UNICEF delivered the following items to the most vulnerable in Nasir on 18 March:

- Cooking sets for 200 families
- 6 rolls of plastic sheeting
- 8 (100 metre) rolls of mosquito netting