Mapping of Tensions and Disputes between Refugees and Host Community in Gendrassa, Maban County

December, 2015
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Cover image: Refugees in Upper Nile State, South Sudan ©UNHCR

About REACH

REACH is a joint initiative of two international non-governmental organizations - ACTED and IMPACT Initiatives - and the UN Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT). REACH's mission is to strengthen evidence-based decision making by aid actors through efficient data collection, management and analysis before, during and after an emergency. By doing so, REACH contributes to ensuring that communities affected by emergencies receive the support they need. All REACH activities are conducted in support to and within the framework of inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. For more information please visit our website: www.reach-initiative.org.

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List of Acronyms

ACTED Agence d'Aide à la coopération technique et au développement
CRA Commission for Refugee Affairs
FGD Focus Group Discussion
GoSS Government of South Sudan
HC Host Community
IDP Internally Displaced Person
KII Key Informant Interview
NGO Non-Governmental Organization
SAF Sudan Armed Forces
SPLM/A Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army
SPLM-N Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North
UNHCR United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Geographical Classifications

State Administration of local government including several Counties
County Primary administrative level below the State including several Payams
Payam Intermediate administrative level including several Bomas
Boma Lowest level of local government administration
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Context
The outbreak of violence between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) in South Kordofan in June 2011, which later spread to Blue Nile State in September, caused thousands of people to flee their homes. The vast majority of refugees crossed the border to neighbouring South Sudan, primarily to Maban County, Upper Nile State. Today, more that 133,232 individuals are living in the four refugee camps established in the county: Doro, Yusuf Batil, Gendrassa and Kaya. Overall coordination for the refugee response in the Maban camps is facilitated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), with different international Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) designated as camp management agencies.

The arrival of such a vast and continuous influx of refugees has not been without consequences. At the onset of the crisis, lack of funding, weak governance, and logistical and access constraints hindered the adequate provision of assistance for refugees. The scale of the refugee influx also meant that the Mabanese host community of around 36,000 individuals, was not considered in the initial response, leaving these already vulnerable communities quickly outnumbered by new arrivals. Over the last four years, pressure on natural resources such as land, food and shelter materials has increased. As a result, tensions between the two communities have risen, frequently developing into violent conflict, which hampers the delivery of aid to both refugees and hosts, and affects the integration of refugees in the area.

Objectives
In response to a growing need to better understand the nature of tensions between refugees and the host community in Maban, REACH conducted a study to map tensions and disputes between host communities and refugees in Gendrassa, at the request of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Conducted in November 2015, the study was designed to help determine the root causes of tensions and disputes between refugees from Gendrassa camp and surrounding host community villages. Specifically, the study sought to identify key topics of dissension or conflict (specifically focusing on natural resources); major conflict hotspots; and identify shared priorities and connectors. Ultimately, the findings aim to inform conflict sensitive programming of humanitarian actors as well as reduce tensions themselves.

Findings presented here are drawn from primary data collected in Gendrassa refugee camp, the third largest camp in Maban, and nearby villages. Gendrassa camp is home to 17,741 individuals and managed by ACTED. Refugees in the camp continue to use their existing tribal authority structures, principally through sheikhs that each represent a population of 15 to 400 households. The nearby host community villages assessed include Peikaji West (1,150 individuals), Peikaji East (912 individuals), Gendrassa (820 individuals) and Batil (991 individuals).

Methodology
The assessment consisted of six focus group discussions (FGDs) with both host community and refugee community members, which included a participatory mapping element in order to understand the spatial dimension of conflict dividers and connectors. Using a questioning route developed by REACH, three of these focus groups were held with participants from surrounding host community villages (Yusuf Batil village, Peikaji West and Peikaji East villages), and three with refugees from Gendrassa camp, between the 27th of November and the 1st of December 2015. In order to capture different opinions and understand the variety of issues faced within each community and the differing perceptions among them, separate FGDs were held with youth male, women and community leaders (sheiks for the refugee community, and elders for the host community).

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1 As of November 2015, latest data available on UNHCR Information Sharing Portal
2 Camp management agencies: ACTED for Gendrassa and Kaya camps, Danish Refugee Council for Doro and Yusuf Batil camps.
3 Towards an environmental strategy for Sudanese refugee hosting areas in Upper Nile and Unity States, South Sudan, UNHCR/SDC, June 2013
4 As of November 2015, latest data available on UNHCR Information Sharing Portal
5 A sheikh is a male leader of a village
6 UNHCR Planning Projection 2016
To complement these findings and understand the wider context, several key informant interviews (KII) were also conducted with Gendrassa camp management, ACTED’s community mobilization team, the Comission for Refugee Affairs (CRA), UNHCR’s security department in Maban and a Mabanese host community leader (Umda).

**Key Findings**

This study found that most important components of tension and dispute between Gendrassa refugees and neighbouring host community villages in regards to natural resources are land, livestock and wood. Overall, access to water was not found to be a prominent issue, due to the prevalence of tap stands, hand pumps and hafirs7 built by NGOs since the beginning of the crisis in the camp and host communities.

The research revealed that the lack of demarcation of boundaries of the camp and of agricultural land was a key factor leading to disputes between Gendrassa camp refugees and neighbouring host communities. The participatory mapping exercise highlighted overlaps in perceived land ownership by both communities, and official boundaries, which need to be resolved as soon as possible.

In addition, the presence of weapons in the camp and host communities, reported military recruitment within camps, as well as the country’s weak judicial system are all factors that aggravate identified tensions and increase the scale of the current conflict.

Humanitarian actors in Maban will therefore need to address some of these proximate causes by further supporting informal approaches to conflict resolution to help refugees and host communities feel safe, free to move and able to ensure their livelihoods.

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7 Hafirs are over ground reservoirs designed to store rain water. They are used for agricultural purposes in rural areas of South Sudan.
INTRODUCTION

The outbreak of violence between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) in South Kordofan in June 2011, which later spread to Blue Nile State in September, caused thousands of people to flee their homes. The vast majority of refugees crossed the border to neighbouring South Sudan, primarily to Maban County, Upper Nile State. Today, more than 133,232 individuals are living in the four refugee camps established in the county: Doro, Yusuf Batil, Gendrassa and Kaya. Gendrassa is the third largest camp, with 18,312 refugees residing there. Overall coordination for the refugee response in the Maban camps is led by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), with different international Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) designated as camp management agencies.

This vast and continuous influx of refugees has not been without consequences. At the onset of the crisis, the international community and the Government of South Sudan (GoSS) were ill-prepared to effectively meet the needs of the refugee population, while little consideration was included for host communities as part of the initial response. While the humanitarian response has made progress since then, the relationship between the refugee and host community continues to suffer.

The host community in Maban was vulnerable prior to the arrival of refugees from Sudan, with high levels of poverty preventing many from meeting their basic needs, including access to safe drinking water, sanitation and health care. In addition, refugees arrived at a time when the host community were unable to produce enough food even for themselves. Indeed, in January 2012, the price of food and basic commodities skyrocketed after the closure of the border between the two countries, pushing prices beyond the means of many.

The relationship has further degraded as host communities have to share scarce and rapidly depleting natural resources with refugees. In addition, there is no natural regeneration capacity of these natural resources in the area. As a result, they have become a driving force of conflict. Minor security incidents involving natural resources are regular and often lead to violent conflict. According to the Commission for Refugee Affairs (CRA), since 2011, 37 host community members and 53 refugees have been killed due to tensions between the two communities.

While appeasing host community and refugee tensions has been a priority for the humanitarian community in Maban, only one assessment of host community-refugee tensions has been conducted to date in 2012. Since then, the number of refugees in Maban has grown considerably, and with no end to the conflict in South Kordofan and Blue Nile in sight, their displacement has become increasingly protracted. As a result, humanitarian actors need clearer information about the current situation, in order to design conflict-sensitive approaches to programming which better assist both communities in the future.

This study was conducted by REACH in November 2015 at the request of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and was designed to help determine the root causes of tensions and disputes between refugees from Gendrassa camp and surrounding host community villages. Specifically, the study sought to identify key topics of dissension or conflict (specifically focusing on natural resources); major conflict hotspots; and identify shared priorities and connectors determine the way forward to achieve peaceful coexistence.

This assessment consisted of focus group discussions with both host community and refugee community members and included a participatory mapping element in order to understand the spatial dimension of conflict dividers and connectors. Several key informant interviews (KII) were also conducted with Gendrassa camp management, ACTED’s community mobilization team, the Commission for Refugee Affairs (CRA), UNHCR’s security department in Maban and a Mabanese host community leader (Umda). This report provides a detailed description of the methodology and why it was chosen, and then outlines the key assessment findings, organised into the following sections: 1. Tensions and Dividers, and 2. Addressing Tensions.

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8 As of November 2015, latest data available on UNHCR Information Sharing Portal
10 Upper Nile Refugee Crisis, Avoiding past mistakes in the coming year. Oxfam Briefing Paper, April 2013
11 Ibid.
12 Interview with CRA staff based in Maban (these are overall numbers, the deaths are not necessarily all related to natural resource conflicts).
13 “Displacement, Disharmony and Disillusion – Understanding Host-Refugee Tensions in Maban County, South Sudan”, 2012
**Methodology**

In order to map tensions and disputes between host communities and refugees in Gendrassa, the project employed a qualitative approach to data collection. REACH used community-level focus group discussions and participatory mapping to understand the tensions experienced by refugees and the host community and their spatial location. This was complemented by key informant interviews with other stakeholders, including camp management, community leaders, community mobilizers, and the Commission for Refugee Affairs (CRA). The “Do No Harm” framework was adopted for this conflict analysis. This framework aims to develop and support local capacities for peace by focusing on dividers and connectors in the conflict.14

A total of six focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted between the 27th of November and the 1st of December 2015. Using a questioning route developed by REACH (See annex 2), three of these focus groups were held with participants from surrounding host community villages (Yusuf Batil village, Peikaji West and Peikaji East villages), and three with refugees from Gendrassa camp. The table below shows the different types of focus group discussion participants and which villages the latter came from (refugee participants all came from Gendrassa camp):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Refugees</th>
<th>Host Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women – randomly selected</td>
<td>Women – randomly selected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Gendrassa camp)</td>
<td>(Peikaji West and East)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheiks - randomly selected</td>
<td>Sheiks/Elders - randomly selected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Gendrassa camp)</td>
<td>(Peikaji West and East)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Youth – randomly selected</td>
<td>Male Youth – randomly selected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Gendrassa camp)</td>
<td>(Yusuf Batil village)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FGDs were conducted with women, community leaders (Sheiks or elders) and male youth in order to capture a wide range of opinions, explore the different issues these groups might be facing and broaden the understanding of the context. Notes were taken and direct quotes were recorded during the FGDs.

The participatory mapping component of the FGDs was conducted in order to get a visual representation of what both communities perceived as their territory, where each community accessed natural resources, and their perception of where conflict hotspots were located. The exercise was focussed around two maps, the first a map of Gendrassa camp showing the different villages within it (See annex, Map 3); and the second showing all four refugee camps and host community villages in Maban County (See annex, Map 1). The first map allowed REACH researchers to determine where refugee participants were from, and where precisely security incidents occurred, within or on the outskirts of the camp. The second map allowed participants to show where natural resources were located, where they went to get these, and where incidents with host communities were occurring most frequently. The information was captured using annotations and by drawing of patterns and lines on the maps.

Spatial information gathered from the FGD/participatory mapping sessions was digitized with ArcGIS, for each main topic related to conflict (one FGD resulted in one map). The analysis then consisted of finding themes and correlating issues for both communities and merging them into single maps, which are presented in this report. Non geo-localized data coming from the FGDs was used for the narrative of the report. Key concepts and themes were then identified and refined.

The Key Informant (KI) questionnaire included questions on natural resources, conflict hotspots, and potential solutions (see annex 3), in order to get to the core of the specific issues that raised by participants, or to better understand issues highlighted as major concerns. Researchers added additional probing questions to add further detail, where needed.

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14 Conflict-sensitive approaches to development, humanitarian assistance and peace building: tools for peace and conflict impact assessment.
Challenges and Limitations

The REACH research team spent 10 days in Maban conducting this assessment, therefore the data necessarily presents only a snapshot of the situation between host communities and refugees. Gendrassa camp was chosen as a case study, since many security incidents related to natural resources had been reported to REACH prior to the launch of data collection. The assessment also benefited from the fact that camp management was willing to facilitate and mobilize the community rapidly.

Findings from this case study can be generalised to some extent to the other camps, since secondary data, REACH reports, and anecdotal evidence reveal common themes of conflict between camps. However, further research should be conducted to better understand the dynamics between certain specific host community villages and camps.

Research focusing on Yusuf Batil camp should be conducted as a priority as reports of security incidents between its inhabitants and the population of Kongo Mamur and Kongo Farajala are very common. In addition, discussions with partners working in Maban revealed that Doro refugee camp was much less involved in security incidents with host communities, therefore finding the reasons for this more appeased relationship could help the humanitarian community to identify solutions.

In addition, it is necessary to continue to monitor the situation over time, add seasonality as a component, and include the growing number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the assessment. IDPs are becoming an increasingly important third actor in this conflict, as they take refuge within Mabanese communities and also depend on the same limited natural resources.

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15 This was consistently pointed out to researchers during the FGDs and KIIs conducted for this assessment.
*Only host communities from Peikaji and Batil villages have been interviewed.
KEY FINDINGS

TENSIONS AND DIVIDERS

1. Access to Resources

To better understand the tensions over natural resources, it is necessary to determine the locations of commonly accessed natural resources, and identify the general agricultural patterns around Gendrassa camp and neighbouring villages, such as Peikaji West, Peikaji East, Gendrassa village and Yusuf Batil village. As a first step, participants in all six FGDs indicated where they were cultivating, herding and fetching water, wood, and wild foods. Map 2 shows the main natural resource patterns around Gendrassa camp and neighboring host community villages.

Map 2, shows the main natural resource patterns around Gendrassa camp and neighboring host community villages. Participants explained that the land on both sides of the main road (Bunj town to Yusuf Batil camp) is mainly used for grazing and gathering wild foods/fruits, for example from “lalop”, desert date, trees. Further away from the main road are areas where both communities usually cut trees for firewood and building materials. As shown on the map, crop areas are situated near rivers (Tombak River to the north and Yabus River to the South) or swamps, where there is irrigation. FGDs revealed that there is one exception to these main agricultural patterns. During the dry season, herders from Gendrassa refugee camp tend to migrate to Guffa (42 km North East of Gendrassa, close to the border with Blue Nile, Soudan) with their livestock and stay there for a few months until the rainy season begins.

In addition to agriculture, fishing is also common in the Yabus River, south of the main road. Several host community villages such as Dangaji and Damajin are situated along the river. Inhabitants of Peijaki West and Yusuf Batil village, as well as Gendrassa refugees mentioned that they fish there.

Overall, availability and access to natural resources is a key driver of pastoralism and livestock productivity. However, in Maban, these natural resources are scarce, and with the additional demand from the vast numbers of refugees, they have become a driving force of conflict. The following sections identify the main topics of tension and where these occur.

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16 The leaves of the lalop tree are edible.

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Access to Land

Access to land is one of the main issues between refugees and host communities. First, tensions arise as both communities compete for land ownership. Second, host community villages neighbouring Gendrassa camp tend to accuse refugees of stealing their crops.

Land ownership is considered a problem by both the host community and refugees. For the host community, the arrival of thousands of refugees has meant that they have had to give up some of their land for the establishment of the camps. Inhabitants of Yusuf Batil village explained that from 2009 to 2011, they were planting sorghum north of the Bunj-Jamman road, but had to stop when Gendrassa refugee camp was established on these lands. As a result, the space available for host community villages to cultivate has decreased significantly.

Host community villagers reported that stealing of crops was major problem. According to them, during the rainy season and right before harvest, refugees come to their lands at night to steal their crops. A Food Security and Livelihood assessment conducted by ACTED in early 2015 found that 72% of host community members’ main source of food was their own agricultural production, therefore, stealing of crops is a significant threat to their food security. This is a major problem as it adds to the erratic rain patterns of the last few years which have already affected harvests.

Inhabitants of Peijaki West and East reported that a lot of harvest theft occurs between their villages and the East of Gendrassa camp, as well as south of the main road where the majority of host community crops are (see map 4 – Natural resources and perceived unsafe zones reported by host communities). They also mentioned that their crops located north of Tombak River (mainly sorghum) were regularly stolen. According to them, theft usually occurs right before harvest season or once the harvest is completed (stealing of stocks).

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17 Maban Host Community Food Security & Livelihood Assessment, ACTED, January 2015
Refugees complained primarily about lack of land. The majority of refugees in Gendrassa camp are from the Ingassana tribe which is traditionally an agro-pastoralist tribe whose main source of income are agriculture (sorghum and vegetables) and livestock production. 19

“We, Ingassanas, are all farmers, we need more land to dig [farm]. These lands are not enough for all of us to cultivate”.
—Male, refugee, Gendrassa camp 19

Access to Wood

Wood is one of the most sought after natural resources, for both the refugee and host communities. It is essential to build shelters and latrines and for each communities’ daily domestic energy needs such as for cooking, heating and lighting. It is also an income-generating resource for both communities, who commonly sell wooden poles, other building materials made out of wood, and charcoal. However, more than four years into the refugee crisis in Maban, with more than 130,000 refugees using forestry resources in addition to host communities, significant deforestation has taken place. 20 In 2012, a rapid environmental assessment already pointed out that forest areas along the main access roads between Bunj and Jamam where the four refugee camps of Doro, Gendrassa, Batil and Jamam (now closed) were located were already highly degraded. 21 The situation has not improved and in a food security and livelihoods assessment carried out by DRC in 2015, NGO and UN staff highlighted deforestation, due to refugees selling timber, as an issue that needs consideration. 22 To this day, the resulting shorter supply of wood continues to negatively affect the relationship between refugees and host communities.

Furthermore, with the ban on tree-cutting imposed by the Ministry of Forestry in 2012, it is necessary to define how and where it is possible for refugees and host communities to get wood for different purposes. ACTED’s community mobilization team explained that while an authorization from the Ministry of Forestry is necessary to cut wood, these are rarely or never requested by refugees.

Host community villagers tend to accuse refugees of widespread and illegal tree cutting. Sheiks and Elders from Peikaji West claimed that there were no more trees in the land separating the village from Gendrassa camp.

“They [the refugees] are cutting trees everywhere, it is a desert here now.”
—Male, host, Yusuf Batil village 23

Refugees from Gendrassa camp mentioned that they were regularly attacked by host community members when cutting trees or collecting wood from the ground and that this had frequently occurred in the land near Peikaji West. Consequently, they reported having to occasionally walk two to three hours north of Gendrassa camp (going past Kaya) to fetch wood.

“The host community will kill us if we cut wood around the camp.”
—Male, refugee, Gendrassa camp 24

Despite widespread reports of altercations and attacks by host communities during firewood collection, women from Gendrassa camp claimed that they were not subject to sexual assault or rape while fetching firewood. However, according to different studies 25 carried out by DRC on gender based violence in the camps between 2013 – March 2015, 50% of key informants reported that rape occurs when women and girls go to the forest to collect firewood. 26 Gendrassa’s camp management team explained that nowadays men tend to accompany women when they collect firewood which may be preventing such attacks. In addition, the

19 Quote from focus group discussions with male youth from Gendrassa refugee camp on November 27, 2015.
20 “Displacement, Disharmony and Disillusion – Understanding Host-Refugee Tensions in Maban County, South Sudan”, 2012
21 Joint (UNHCR, UNEP, OCHA, Government of South Sudan) Mission Report, Maban Camps, Upper Nile State, 16 to 22 November 2012
22 Food Security and Livelihoods Assessment in Maban, Upper Nile, South Sudan, Danish Refugee Council, January 2015.
23 Quote from focus group discussions with male youth from host community (Yusuf Batil village) on December 1, 2015.
24 Quote from focus group discussions with male youth from Gendrassa refugee camp on November 27, 2015
26 Gender Based Violence Research on Sexual Assault: Maban County, South Sudan, Danish Refugee Council, Research Study, August 2015.
team mentioned that sexual violence against refugees was more prevalent around Kongo Mamur, south of Yusuf Batil camp. Nevertheless, it should be noted that, as this topic is extremely sensitive, women may not have felt comfortable discussing it in depth in the FGDs. Overall, although the ban on tree cutting is in place, FGDs revealed that refugees had little, unclear and sometimes contradicting information about the specifics of the act (if and which type of trees they can or cannot cut, if they can pick wood that is already on the ground, if they can cut wood in particular areas, etc.). The lack of clarity is exemplified by the following quote:

“We cannot cut trees, or the authorities will stop us. We fear them and the host community when we fetch wood”.
—Female, refugee, Gendrassa camp

Consequently, it is important to clarify the existing rules on access wood and inform the population about the available alternatives.

Finally, supporting reforestation in Maban should be a priority for humanitarian actors in Maban in 2016. The lack of natural regeneration capacity of the forestry resources has been signalled by multiple assessments but, to date, no such program has been implemented.

Access to Water

While the 2012 assessment identified water for livestock as a challenge (particularly during the dry season), discussions held with refugee and host communities in November/December 2015 showed that this was no longer a key concern for either community. Communities use seasonal rivers and hafirs for livestock during the rainy season. Although hafirs tend to dry up a few months into the dry season, refugees said that they would graze their livestock near the border with Sudan and stay there until the rainy season started again. Map 5 (Natural resources and perceived unsafe zones reported by refugees) shows refugees’ seasonal migration to Guffa. Concerning the host community, young men from Yusuf Batil village revealed that during the dry season they get water from handpumps and waterpumps for their livestock. Community leaders from Peikaji West and East also said that they use the water pumps in their villages to get water for their livestock during the dry season. A 2015 Food Security and Livelihood assessment confirms that a large number of host community households are utilizing tap stands for livestock (34%). While communities do not see this as an issue, this has an impact on overall water use.

Overall, the construction of hafirs, tapstands or handpumps by the humanitarian community and petroleum companies inside and around the camps, as well as for the host communities has possibly avoided potential conflicts around water for livestock. Moreover, camp management is currently planning the construction of additional hafirs around Gendrassa camp (towards Kaya camp).

While water for livestock was not found to be a significant problem for either the host community or refugees, water for crops needs to be monitored. As can be seen on map 4, farmers from Peikaji East and West, Dangaji, Bunj cultivate near the Yabus river. The presence of this stream also attracts refugees, who sometimes expressed their belief that the land that they have been given by the host community is infertile. In addition, the stream north of Gendrassa camp, is only a seasonal one. Therefore, when refugees go to the agricultural lands south of the main road, the host community accuses them of stealing crops. Gendrassa refugees mentioned that the footpath between Peikaji West and Daganji (see map 5) is particularly dangerous and fear being attacked there. Several refugees have been killed on this footpath.

Both inhabitants of Peikaji West and Yusuf Batil village, as well as Gendrassa refugees mentioned fishing in the Yabus River. However, refugees explained that they usually go in the evening, in groups of men. They leave the camp at around 6pm and walk to the river to fish at night. They added that fishing in the area is dangerous and that the host community will attack refugees if they find them there. Access to Yabus River for fishing purposes will need to be monitored and secured to avoid clashes between host community and refugees there.

27 Quote from focus group discussions with women from Gendrassa camp on December 1, 2015.
Livestock theft

Livestock theft is widespread in South Sudan. In general, it takes the form of cattle raiding, since cattle are an indicator of social standing and wealth in pastoralist communities and are often used in restorative justice and marriage practices. In Maban, large cattle raids are rare, but small-scale incidents of livestock theft between refugees and host community villages were reportedly frequent, and mostly target goats and sheep.

In the face of food shortages, recent research suggests that livestock theft may increase in the coming months and years as a coping strategy. Maban is currently classed as in “stressed” phase of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 2), with erratic weather patterns in recent years reported to have affected crop planting time, slowed crop growth rate and lowered germination rates and yields. Food security also remains a key concern among refugees in Maban, as REACH’s Multi Sector Needs Assessments of Yusuf Batil and Doro refugee camps found. Food security is likely to be further aggravated by reductions to food rations for refugees, following announcements by the World Food Programme (WFP) of a 30% decrease in July 2015.

Livestock theft was reported by both host community members and refugees. Refugees from Gendrassa camp reported that livestock theft was common along the Gendrassa-Bunj road or in the area directly to its south (see map 5). Participants from the neighbouring host community villages of Peikaji West and Yusuf Batil village mentioned having their livestock stolen from grazing land south of the main road; from land between Gendrassa camp and Peikaji West; and at times from their villages at night. Gendrassa camp management team reported that pigs belonging to the host community living in Peikaji West occasionally wandered into Gendrassa refugee camp. As refugees within the camp are mainly Muslim and consider pigs impure, on several occasions the latter have been killed by refugees, creating tensions with their owners.

“Before the refugees came, there was no cattle or goat theft. We could leave our goats by themselves and they would come back.”
—Male, host, Yusuf Batil village

While livestock theft was reported by both communities, host community members were more likely than refugees to cite this as a primary cause of tension. Reported numbers of livestock stolen from the host community were also generally much higher than the numbers reported by refugees: host communities reported they often have hundreds of goats stolen at a time, while refugees more commonly mentioned the theft of several animals, once in a while. In contrast, refugees expressed more fear about encountering host community members, while herding their livestock and risking attack. This has forced many refugees to graze their animals in Tanfona or Guffa, cattle kraals near the border with Sudan.

“If our goats go South of the main road [Gendrassa-Bunj road] then we cannot get it back. It is too dangerous for us to search for them.”
—Male, refugee, Gendrassa camp

Livestock theft is therefore a significant problem and is related to the availability of food. However, having clearer and separate grazing areas for both communities might prevent theft and also reduce the likelihood of confrontations between them.

34 Pastoral Violence in Jonglei, Tom Richardson, ICE Case Study, Number 274, December 2011.
35 2015 Maban County seasonal livelihood calendar review Report, ACTED, October 2015
36 http://www.fws.net/east-africa/south-sudan
37 Ibid.
40 KIs interviewed mentioned that livestock theft was common due to the population being hungry. Anecdotal evidence suggests that on several occasions it was discovered thieves had eaten the stolen livestock.
In 2014, a major security incident occurred between Gendrassa refugee camp and Peikaji West, the neighbouring host community village to the East of the camp. Although versions of the incident differ, allegedly a refugee was herding his livestock near Peikaji West when he was approached by several of its inhabitants who wanted to steal his livestock. The herder managed to get away, but the next morning, the host community reportedly planned to attack the villages of Jebelatin and Ayouk in the East of the camp (see map 5). The refugee community reportedly anticipated the attack and fled to the North of the camp, which prevented a high number of casualties. The two villages stayed in the North of the camp to avoid further altercations with Peikaji West and are due to be relocated to Kaya camp at the end of 2015.

2. Access to Security

Freedom of Movement

Ongoing insecurity in Maban County is significantly affecting the freedom of movement of both communities. Refugees are particularly wary of taking the main roads, specifically the Bunj-Gendrassa and the Kaya - Gendrassa roads (see map 5). FGD participants from Gendrassa camp said that walking along these roads was extremely risky for them, as refugees are regularly attacked there. Refugees mentioned only feeling safe if they were in a car. This limits refugees' freedom of movement as very few cars are present in Maban apart from UNHCR or NGO cars, which are used for humanitarian purposes.

“The Gendrassa – Bunj road is very dangerous, we never walk along this road. We need to be in a car to be safe”.
—Male, refugee, Gendrassa camp\(^{38}\)

Refugees from Gendrassa that work for NGOs based in Doro occasionally find themselves stuck in Gendrassa (and vice versa) and cannot go to work, as security measures are temporarily put in place by NGOs in order to avoid security incidents on the road. Refugees explained that such measures affect their ability to make a living.

Host communities, on the other hand, tend to avoid going to the markets in Gendrassa and Yusuf Batil camps for fear of being attacked by the refugee community. This is an obstacle to the host community’s access to market (host community members generally use Bunj market for selling or purchasing) but also impedes the development of economic ties between the two communities.

Weak Rule of Law

Weak rule of law in Maban has negatively impacted the relationship between Mabanese and refugees from all camps. Inhabitants of Gendrassa camp insisted on the need to have security incidents (from petty crime to murders) judged by the traditional judicial system. According to them, this would prevent revenge killings as well as counter the snowball effect an isolated security incident can have on the whole refugee community in Maban and on the Mabanese. Refugees from Gendrassa camp said that they suffered greatly from this effect. A strong judicial system would mean that perpetrators would be judged on an individual basis and would not fuel the “host community versus refugee conflict”.

“If any problem arises, if a rule is broken, then the perpetrator should be judged by the traditional judicial system… not by the host community itself, who will just murder the perpetrator”.
—Sheik, refugee, Gendrassa camp\(^{39}\)

Conflict and the Presence of Weapons

Although a sensitive topic, the presence of weapons and military recruitment within camps in Maban is one that needs to be addressed, as it is a factor that contributes to a climate conducive to violent conflict and its further escalation. While disarmament is currently ongoing in Yusuf Batil and Gendrassa camps at the request of the GoS, the process is viewed with suspicion by many. Some have claimed that the exercise is also an opportunity for armed...
groups to recruit new soldiers, while representatives of armed groups have claimed that the exercise is meant to mobilize deserters and send them back to military front lines.

Addressing Tensions
As seen above, discussions with refugees from Gendrassa camp and neighbouring host communities revealed multiple issues between the two communities, while the participatory mapping element of these discussions located the different places where the tensions have each community feels unsafe, and where incidents have occurred. The following section examines how to reduce the main issues highlighted by refugees and host community members.

Access to Land
Access to land is the most contentious issue between refugees and host community members as it pertains to agricultural land and grazing lands, which both communities are competing for, as well as land boundaries. The following sub-sections examine existing and potential solutions to reduce conflict over access to land.

Land Agreement
The humanitarian community realized early on in the response that access to agricultural land was an issue between refugees and the Mabanese and in 2014, an agreement was signed stipulating that the host community was giving about 45 square km of land to Gendrassa, Yusuf Batil and Kaya camps for agriculture. The specific portion of land given can be seen on Map 6 (shown as the triangular form). According to ACTED, refugees from the aforementioned camps did not immediately exploit the land as they required a traditional handover ceremony to be organized. This ceremony was only conducted mid-year in 2015. Furthermore, in the FGDs, refugees claimed that they did not have enough seeds to plant although vegetable and staple crop seeds were distributed to both the host and refugee communities for the 2015 planting season. Nonetheless, as a result, the impact of the land agreement on the reduction of tensions between Gendrassa refugees and surrounding host community villages has yet to be fully observed.

Demarcation of Agricultural Land
Regardless of its use, the demarcation of the land given to Gendrassa camp by the host community is an issue. Although the limits of this portion of land are clearly set in the land agreement signed by both parties, the exact location of these boundaries on the ground remains unclear to both refugees and host communities. This means that refugees and host communities may be frequently walking, cultivating and herding in each other’s lands without even knowing it. Map 6 clearly shows the overlap of Peikaji West’s perception of its agricultural land and the official land given to Gendrassa refugees. According to Gendrassa camp management, the issue will be discussed with the Payam administrator in the coming months. Once the boundaries have been more clearly demarcated, information sessions and with refugees and host community members could help each group to understand the purpose of the land donation and the importance of respecting its boundaries.

Camp Boundaries
When Gendrassa refugee camp was established, in 2012, the camp boundaries were demarcated with painted trees. However, many of these trees have now been cut or the paint has faded. As a result, refugees are not aware of where the camp ends and where host community land begins. To solve this situation, ACTED camp management decided at the beginning of 2015 that it would build brick columns, positioned 500m apart, to delimit the camp, allowing the demarcation to last longer. While this solution had been approved by the host community’s Umda, host community members intervened on construction of the first column, disputing their Umda’s decision and asking for the construction to be suspended until further discussions were held with them.

Another meeting was held in September 2015 between camp management, CRA, UNHCR and host community elders, with the issue to be taken forward to the Payam administrator level in 2016. At the time of writing, this issue remains unresolved, leaving the possibility for further tensions to arise. Lessons can be learned from this process, suggesting that future demarcation exercises should be done in consultation with all host community villages in the area, since the exercise has the potential to create tensions among the

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40 2015 Maban County seasonal livelihood calendar review Report, ACTED, October 2015
host community itself. Indeed, FGDs with Peikaji East and West and with Yusuf Batil village demonstrated that host community villages do not have the same understanding of the camp’s boundaries.

Freedom of Movement
In order to ensure that both refugees and host community members enjoy freedom of movement, securing the main roads and the markets should be a priority for 2016. For the CRA, securing roads and markets will be possible with a stronger police presence. The government has said that fifty police men would be sent to the area in 2015, however, these have not yet arrived. The CRA mentioned that the implementation of a curfew will also help reduce security incidents along major roads. Moreover, enabling the free movement of host community members is of utmost importance, as the success of a recently created common livestock/butcher market created to prevent livestock theft will depend on its use by both communities.

Insecurity
The presence of weapons and reported military recruitment within refugee camps in Maban are factors that contribute to a climate conducive to violent conflict and its further escalation. Therefore, humanitarian actors should be sensitive to local efforts to support disarmament, and continue to support initiatives to improve security in and around the camps.

While host community members and refugees immediately dismissed tribal and ethnic affiliation as a factor in the conflict, conversations with key informants suggest that shared ethnic and religious ties may offer important points of connection between refugee and host communities. Interviews with Gendrassa’s camp management and CRA revealed that a reason for the more peaceful relationship between Doro refugees and the Mabanese could possibly be explained by their cultural and religious similarities, factors which have led the two communities to be closer and even to intermarry.

Strengthening Rule of Law and Supporting Joint Peace Committees
Weak rule of law in Maban County is a proximate cause of tensions between refugees and host communities. Protection actors in Maban are currently working on strengthening the judicial system (police, courts, prosecutor’s office…) through trainings on rule of law, human rights and Refugee law. Access to justice is also being evaluated. Assessing the current structure will help understand how it can be improved. Further emphasis on strengthening institutional capacities for peace will be needed in 2016.

As an alternative to the weak judicial system in the area, joint peace committees (an informal approach to conflict resolution) werereactivated in February 2015 following the major security incident between Peikaji West and the villages of Jebelatin and Ayouk in Gendrassa camp. The joint committees are composed of nine individuals representing the host community and nine individuals representing refugees from Gendrassa and Yusuf Batil camps, and aim to manage conflicts between the two communities.

Meetings are facilitated by ACTED camp management, UNHCR and the CRA. The committee is supposed to meet every Saturday and on an ad hoc basis if necessary (if an event calls for it). At first, these meeting were chaired by the host community Umda but aid actors soon realised that the meetings were not being called. As a result, UNHCR and ACTED decided that these meetings should be led by the Payam administrator and take place at his office. However, there is a real need for more concerted efforts as to make meetings happen. Spontaneous organization and engagement from both the host community and refugee leaders is needed in order for this solution to be a sustainable, legitimate and efficient one.
CONCLUSION

This study, conducted in November 2015, was intended to help determine the root causes of tensions and disputes between refugees from Gendrassa camp and surrounding host community villages, particularly those related to natural resources. The “Do No Harm” framework was adopted for this conflict analysis, examining micro-level dynamics between actors in the conflict, and focusing on determining dividers and connectors.

The most important components of tension and dispute between Gendrassa refugees and neighbouring host community villages in regards to natural resources were found to be land, livestock and wood. Together, these issues have led to multiple security incidents, which are generally located in areas between the camp and the host community villages; in cultivating/herding lands; and around major roads. These places, identified through participatory mapping, constitute “hotspots” which are generally considered unsafe. Both refugees and host communities are reluctant to go there for fear of often violent attacks, or due to the likelihood of theft of livestock or crops. Fear of violent incidents was found to be limiting people’s freedom of movement in Maban, as well as affecting their ability to feed themselves or continue their livelihood activities.

Finding solutions to address these tensions is therefore crucial and urgent. Reforestation programs, clear laws regulating tree-cutting and communicating alternative ways of collecting wood are important to relieve the stress on wood resources. To reduce livestock theft, the recently created common livestock/butcher markets need to be used by both communities. In order to do this, securing access to main roads should be a priority.

Concerning access to land, the research revealed two major issues. First, that refugees and host communities did not know where the limits of Gendrassa refugee camp were, and that previous demarcation on trees had disappeared. Second, that host communities (such as Peikaji West and East) claim territory where refugees from Gendrassa camp have their agricultural land, according to the land agreement of 2014.

In order to mitigate these misunderstandings, the creation of clear, visible and commonly agreed boundaries is of utmost importance for Gendrassa refugees and neighbouring host communities alike to coexist peacefully in the available space. Once boundaries have been physically demarcated, information campaigns should be used to sensitize both communities to their location, as well as the reasons for their existence. It will be essential for aid actors to raise awareness around these boundaries and what the implications and risks of crossing these would be.

Proximate causes of conflict, such as the presence of weapons in camps and host community villages, reported military recruitment within camps, and the weak rule of law are additional factors contributing to a climate conducive to violent conflict. Although these causes are difficult to address, the humanitarian community can support local efforts for disarmament and peaceful dispute resolution, and further develop informal approaches to conflict resolution.
ANNEXES

Annex 1: Maps

Map 3: Map of Gendrassa refugee camp
Map 4: Natural resources and perceived unsafe zones reported by host communities
Map 5: Natural resources and perceived unsafe zones reported by refugees
Map 6: Overlapping area between refugees and host community agricultural lands
Map 7: Previously shared agricultural lands by host communities
Map 8: Global map of host community/refugee tensions over natural resources

Annex 2: Focus Group Discussion Guide
Only host communities from Peikaji and Batil villages have been interviewed. **Reported hotspots indicate accurate identified incidents between refugees and host communities, while unsafe zones are locations within each community felt unsafe and mentioned inaccurate incidents.**


REACH_SSD_Maban_ConflictMapping_HC_7Feb2016

Note: Data, designations and boundaries contained on this map are not warranted to be error-free and do not imply acceptance by the REACH partners, associates, donors or any other stakeholder mentioned on this map.
Refugees migration during rainy season to Guffa (see map upper right)

**Reported hotspots indicate accurate identified incidents between refugees and host communities, while unsafe zones are locations within each community felt unsecure and mentioned unaccurate incidents.


Coordinate System: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 36N

REACH_SSD_Maban_ConflictMapping_Refugees_7Feb2016

Draft for Humanitarian Purposes Only

Production date: 7th February 2016

UNHCR Office

Refugee Camp

**Reported hot spots**

Administrative
- County Capital
- Main village
- Camp area

Natural resources
- Tree cutting
- Crop
- Grazing
- Wild food
- Fishing

Zones perceived as unsafe
- By refugees
- Reported hot spots**

* Only host communities from Peikaji and Batil villages have been interviewed **Reported hotspots indicate accurate identified incidents between refugees and host communities, while unsafe zones are locations within each community felt unsecure and mentioned unaccurate incidents.
* Only host communities from Peikaji and Batil villages have been interviewed  
** Reported hotspots indicate accurate identified incidents between refugees and host communities, while unsafe zones are locations within each community felt unsecure and mentioned unaccurate incidents.

South Sudan, Maban - Gendrassa Conflict mapping
Overlapping area between refugees and host communities agricultural lands

Coordinate System: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 36N

REACH_SSD_Maban_ConflictMapping_OverLand_7Feb2016

Note: Data, designations and boundaries contained on this map are not warranted to be error-free and do not imply acceptance by the REACH partners, associates, donors or any other stakeholder mentioned on this map.
**Only host communities from Peikaji and Batil villages have been interviewed**

**Reported hotspots indicate accurate identified incidents between refugees and host communities, while unsafe zones are locations within each community felt insecure and mentioned inaccurate incidents.**

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**Data sources:** administrative units, hydology: OCHA COD; basemap: Esri; roads: PAE and ESRI (2015); all other features: REACH (2015).

Coordinate System: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 36N

**Note:** Data, designations and boundaries contained on this map are not warranted to be error-free and do not imply acceptance by the REACH partners, associates, donors or any other stakeholder mentioned on this map.