

Situation Overview: Displacement and Intentions of IDPs in Kajo-Keji County

South Sudan, December 2016

Introduction

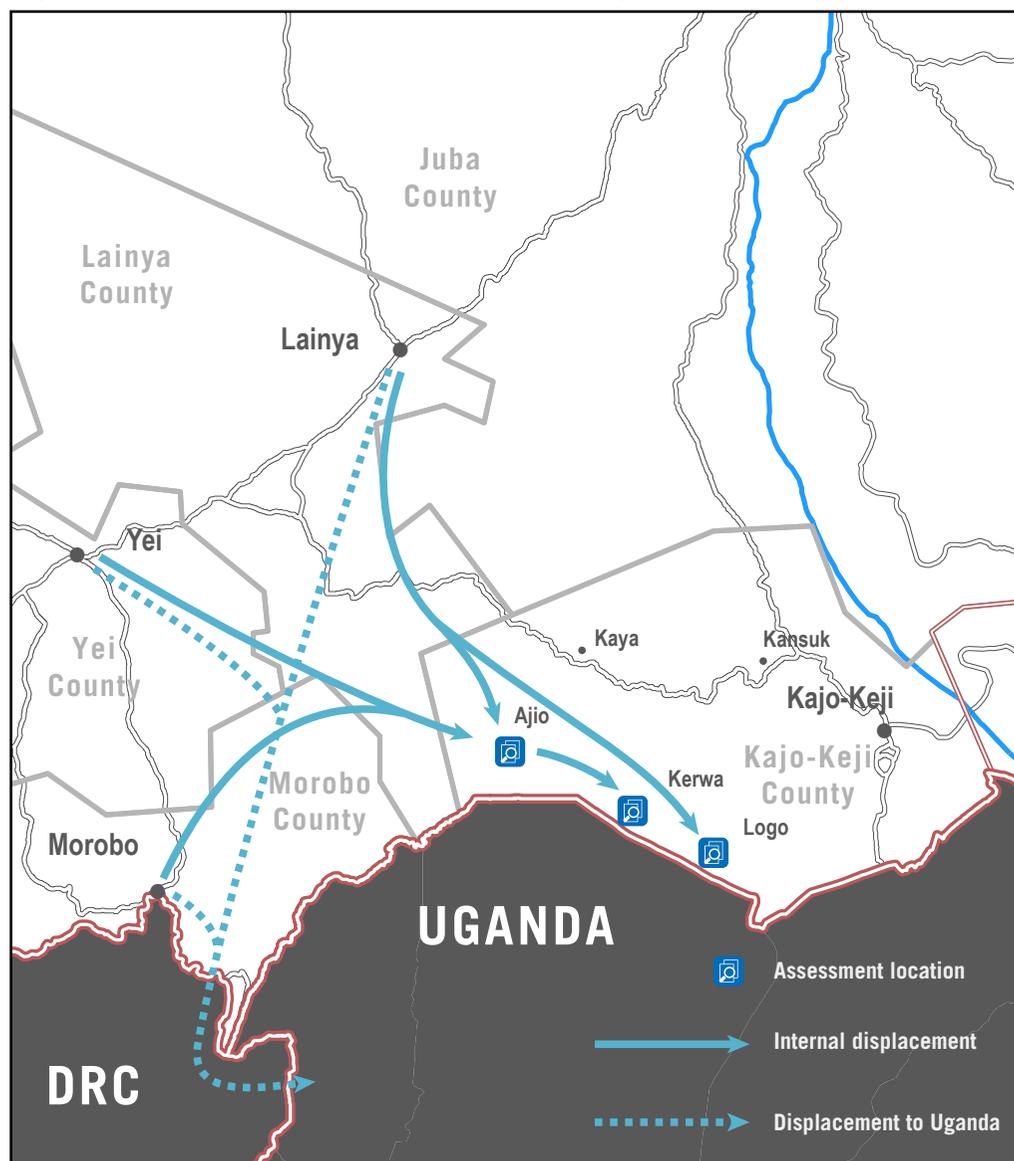
Following the renewed outbreak of violence in Juba between the Government-led SPLA and former opposition SPLA-IO on 8 July 2016, instability has spread throughout the Equatorial region,¹ particularly Kajo-Keji, Lainya, Yei, and Morobo Counties. There have been numerous reports of civilians being directly targeted by armed groups, in addition to widespread theft on supposition of affiliation with opposing armed groups.²

Between the 20 and 22 December 2016, an inter-agency Initial Rapid Need Assessment (IRNA) was deployed in Kajo-Keji County to assess the number and conditions of IDPs coming from the four aforementioned affected counties and now sheltering in Aji, Kerwa, and Logo settlements. During the assessment, IDPs displaced from Kansuk by recent cattle raids were also identified (Maps 1 and 2). Because of logistic and security constraints, only one Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted in each location with an average of 8 IDPs of mixed gender to collect information on their displacement, including push-pull factors, means of travel, communication and future intentions. This situation overview summarizes the key findings of the assessment.

Displacement

Respondents were either displaced by cattle raiding or the conflict, depending on where they came from. In Lainya, Yei and Morobo Counties, people left their homes in early July following the arrival of armed groups in the area, fleeing to nearby uninhabited areas in the bush. IDPs remained trapped in the bush between opposing armed groups, until the strain of the lack of food

Map 1: Assessed settlements in Kajo-Keji County and conflict displacement routes, December 2016



and other resources led them to flee towards Kajo-Keji County and Uganda between July and November 2016. At the same time, cattle raids targeting Kansuk and Kaya villages within Kajo-Keji forced people to move south to Kerwa and Logo settlements near the border of Uganda. Respondents reported that since 2013, cattle keepers from Bor have been moving into grazing lands along the Nile, south of Juba (green area in Map 2) altering their historical cattle migration routes through Lakes State. Respondents reported that since 2016, some cattle keepers have moved even further south, and have started to raid the cattle of the local host community.³

Push and pull factors

All of the respondents reported that the main reason for fleeing their homes was due to insecurity. The displaced population reported choosing to stay in Kajo-Keji rather than crossing the border to Uganda because they perceived the Ugandan camps to be an unwelcoming environment, particularly from the local host community, who was reported to be hostile and often attack refugees. The respondents described the southern part of Kajo-Keji County as a safe location used by displaced populations since the First Sudanese Civil War (1954 - 1972). The local host community appeared to be tolerant and supportive of the IDPs and the geography of the area made it very safe. It is very near to Uganda and has numerous walking paths that can be used to cross the border while eluding checkpoints and

1. REACH, "Situation Overview Central Equatoria". October 2016
2. UNHCR, "Sounds warning over situation in South Sudan's Yei"; Jonathan Pendneault, "War comes to Yei: South Sudan's Safe Haven no more". Daily Maveric, 22 November 2016
3. National newspaper "This Day", Tuesday 16 January 2017

border patrols if they need to escape.

Means of travel

The vast majority of the respondents reached their current locations by walking slowly through the bush while avoiding main communication routes and villages. The journey lasted up to one month to arrive at their current destination. Only few respondents who possessed a motorcycle were able to flee with their assets, while only few managed to bring their cattle with them. The vast majority fled with nothing except the clothes they were wearing or basic NFIs.

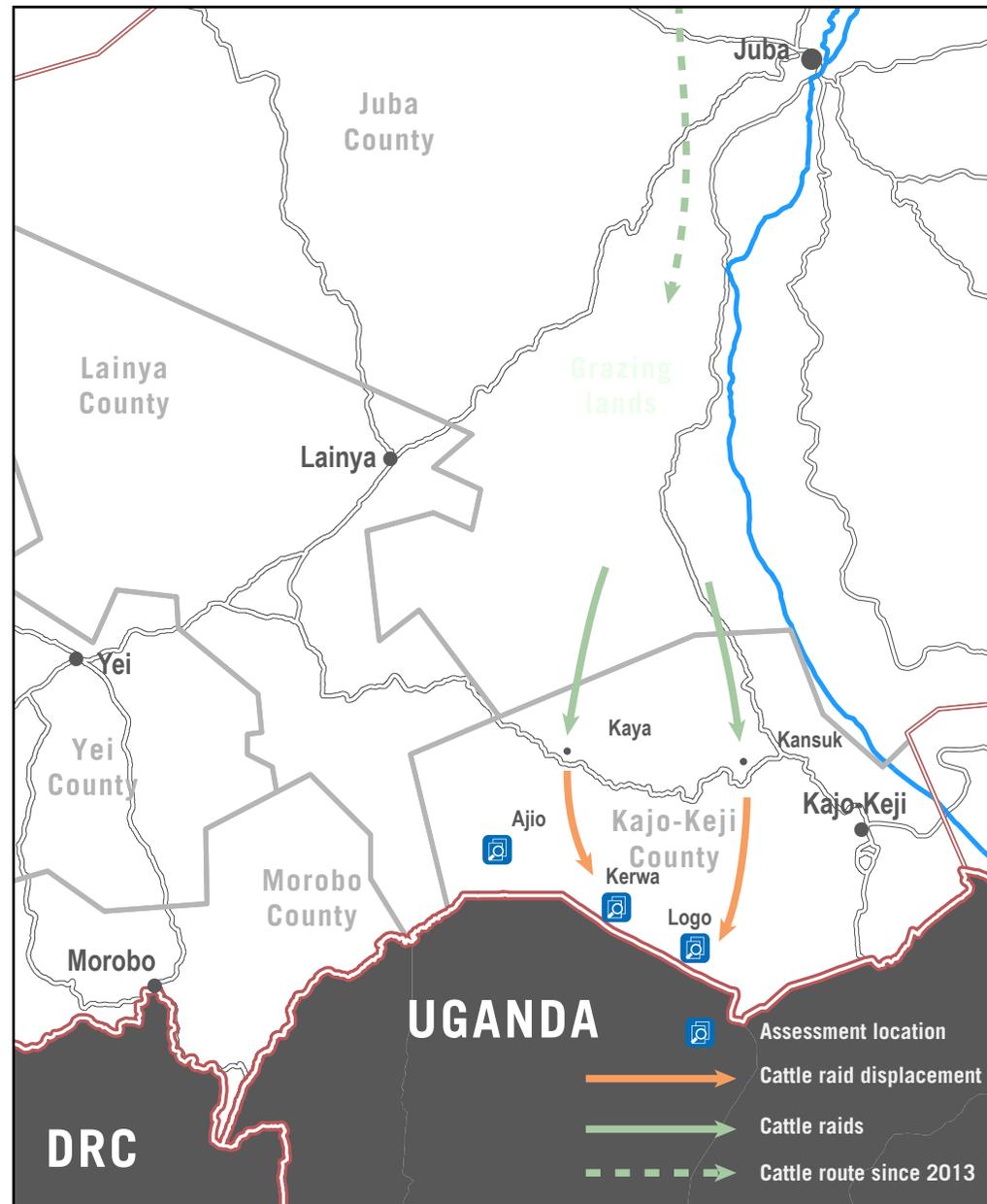
Intentions

All the respondents displaced to the assessed sites reported that they did not intend to move into Uganda unless forced to do so. At all the three assessed sites, local chiefs had assigned land plots to IDPs, many of whom were constructing new semi-permanent shelters. Among the respondents, many reported that they had relatives still hiding in their areas of origin who intended to reunite with them as soon as possible. Families that were able to flee together the village often split once in the bush, with either men coming before their wives and children to assess the situation, or women and children coming while men remained behind to look after their properties. In many cases, families were separated and lost contact with their relatives during their displacement.

Communication

Respondents reported having little if no contact with their relatives left behind and little knowledge of the situation in other, surrounding settlements. Much of their knowledge was informed by rumors or information coming from other people belonging to the same community.

Map 2: Cattle migration routes and cattle raids Kajo-Keji County, December 2016



Conclusion

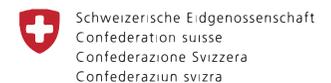
According to the information collected, IDPs are likely to continue to arrive in increasing numbers in the immediate future. The displaced population is settling in the area and does not wish to move on to settlements in Uganda. However, this may occur if living conditions deteriorate and the pressure on the host community to provide life-sustaining services continues to increase.

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