

United Nations Mission

In SUDAN



October 2009

A BITTER HARVEST

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DIARY

7 September: The international non-governmental organization (NGO) Global Witness issued a report entitled "Fuelling Mistrust: The Need for Transparency in Sudan's Oil Industry", which accused the Government of National Unity (GoNU) of underreporting quantities of oil produced at wells located in Southern Sudan by as much as 26 per cent. The GoNU subsequently dismissed the allegations as unfounded.

7 September: The Northern Khartoum Criminal Court fined Lubna Hussein, a journalist and former UNMIS staff member, for "immoral or indecent dress" for having worn trousers in public in July. Ms. Hussein denied the accusation in court and the Union of Sudanese Journalists paid her fine of 500 Sudanese pounds to spare her the alternate sentence of one month in prison.

9 September: The National Congress Party (NCP), the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and the US special envoy to Sudan J. Scott Gration held another inconclusive round of talks in the regional capital of Juba to address outstanding CPA issues.

9 September: The Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) commenced a seven-day disarmament operation in Juba and environs with the aim of reducing violence and criminal activity in the city. GoSS President Salva Kiir Mayardit reportedly issued orders to implement similar operations in all 10 southern states.

11 September: A high-level UN delegation led by Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sudan Ameerah Haq visited Western Equatoria State to highlight the worsening humanitarian situation in areas targeted by the Lord's Resistance Army. Ms. Haq expressed concern about the plight of civilians in the region and reiterated the UN's commitment to continue humanitarian assistance and support peace negotiations.

14 September: The National Elections Commission (NEC) announced that the deadline for filing formal objections to the geographical boundaries of electoral constituencies had expired. The NEC reportedly received over 500 appeals.

18 September: A student celebration of the International Day of Peace was observed worldwide under the theme "Disarm now for a better world". Students gathered at UNMIS headquarters in Khartoum where they were linked with youth at UN Headquarters in New York and other locations via a video conference.

22 September: UNMIS strongly condemned in a statement the 20 September attack on Dinka Hol village of Duk Padiet *payam* (township), Jonglei State that killed dozens of residents.

27 September: President Omar Al-Bashir reportedly ordered an end to pre-publication state censorship of the press. The announcement came two weeks after newspaper editors said they met with officials of Sudan's national intelligence and security services to sign a code of journalistic conduct. UNMIS welcomed the decision.

29 September: UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon condemned in the strongest possible terms an attack on a UNAMID convoy in El Geneina, West Darfur, on 28 September, which killed one peacekeeper and injured two others. Mr. Ban urged the Government of Sudan to do its utmost to identify the perpetrators and hold them accountable for the deadly attack.

30 September: The SPLM-sponsored All Political Party Conference ended in Juba. A communiqué entitled the "Juba Declaration for Dialogue and National Consensus" addressed issues of dialogue and national consensus, national reconciliation, democratic transformation, economic and social conditions, and foreign policy. The NCP boycotted the event, and three southern political parties withdrew from the conference on the second day of its proceedings.



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Editor-in-Chief: Khaled Mansour
Managing Editor: Catherine Waugh
Associate Editor: Joseph Contreras
Assistant Editor: Eszter Farkas
Design: Zesar Amin

For comments and suggestions contact
unmis-insudan@un.org

FRONT COVER: Woman showing river weed villagers were eating, Southern Sudan. Photo: UNMIS/ Fred Noy.
BACK COVER: A month after flooding, much of the Soba area of Khartoum is still under water. Photo: WHO.

A BITTER HARVEST

The rainy season of 2009 will be remembered as one of the driest in Southern Sudan in recent memory.

The devastating effects of insufficient rainfall on local farmers can be seen in the county of Ikotos in Eastern Equatoria State. Acute food shortages have forced many rural villagers to seek help in the state capital.

One of those is Shima Alfred, a mother of four who made the 60-kilometer trip from her Ikotos home to Torit with her four-year-old daughter after the family's crops failed earlier this year.

"Our crops have dried out due to a lack of rain," explained Ms. Alfred, who was admitted to Torit Hospital on 1 September for treatment. "There is no money and nothing in the market like maize grains or sorghum."

Ninety per cent of all agricultural output in Southern Sudan is dependent on rainfall – as opposed to irrigation – and Eastern Equatoria is one of six southern states hardest hit by this year's disappointing levels of precipitation.

The other five states are Jonglei, Warrap, Unity, Northern Bahr El-Ghazal



Laura Atezia with a sack of pea leaves and hips of leaves in front selling like other women of her mother's age.



Shima Alfred right, feeding her daughter with porage in small mug.

and Upper Nile, according to a rapid crop assessment conducted throughout the south in mid-August by the Government of Southern Sudan's Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in conjunction with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization and World Food Programme (WFP).

The survey predicted a decline in Southern Sudan's sorghum production of between 30 and 40 per cent in 2009. The outlook was even worse for maize, which was projected to fall by between 50 and 60 per cent this year.

While other factors are also at play, including escalating tribal violence in the region and a lack of tools and seeds for cultivation, the assessment identified this year's scant rains as the main cause of plummeting food production in Southern Sudan.

By all accounts, the emerging picture of food insecurity does not approach the catastrophic levels of famine seen in parts of Southern Sudan during the late 1980s.

But there are pockets of severe food scarcity across the region, and Ikotos County is a case in point.

Government and Catholic church officials started to receive reports of hunger and looming food shortages from different counties in Eastern Equatoria as early as February of this year.

But only in more recent weeks have those early alarm bells been borne out by actual cases of malnutrition and hunger-related deaths.

Torit Hospital senior nutrition officer Lucy Koyak said that over a hundred people suffering from malnutrition had been treated at the hospital thus far. She knew of at least a dozen deaths related to food shortages.

"The hunger in the state has forced some families and their children to eat once a day for 2 Sudanese pounds or less," said Ms. Koyak. "(Some) go without, since there is no money and little or nothing to eat."

Rex Charles, the director of the state office of the Southern Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission, said that children have been especially affected by the food insecurity phenomenon.

He said that in one village in Magwi County, three children died

"The hunger in the state has forced some families and their children to eat once a day for 2 Sudanese pounds or less"

after eating poisonous wild yams while their parents were out searching for food.

The plight of certain rural communities has led some residents to cross into Uganda in quest of food, said the Catholic priest Dario Arite in a letter he wrote to the bishop of Torit diocese, Akio Johnson Mutek.

Others have sought out scapegoats. A group of Evangelical missionaries was chased out of a Didinga village near the town of Chukudum earlier this year when they were blamed for the absence of rainfall.

Southern Sudan is expected to receive above average levels of precipitation in the final weeks of the rainy season. But experts caution that this could produce serious flooding in the states of Northern Bahr El-Ghazal, Warrap and Jonglei that might wipe out existing crops.

The WFP, Catholic Relief Services and other international non-governmental organizations have been working closely with Eastern Equatoria State authorities to deliver food to remote communities currently unable to feed themselves.

In August, the state ministry of health delivered three cartons of nutritional paste to 75 malnourished children in the county of Kapoeta South with support from UNICEF.

But Alfred Kayumbe Tugul of the Eastern Equatoria State Ministry of Finance warns that a shortage of trucks and poor road conditions have hampered access to some rural areas.

Food reserves are being depleted fast and market prices are rising, said Mr. Tugul, and conditions may not improve before the start of next year.

"As the state government, our appeal goes to the humanitarian community to help fight this food insecurity," he said. ■

Story and photos: Ojja Bosco

RECIPES FOR SUCCESS

As the sun rises, women dressed in vibrant colours and sporting bracelets emerge from their homes in Arbaat, Red Sea State. Wielding hoes and machetes, they head to a lush, green field of abu sabean, a crop used as cattle feed, which grows abundantly -- provided there is enough water.

The women work on a community farm that has received generators and water pumps under the auspices of the UN Development Programme's Recovery and Rehabilitation Programme (RRP). The farm is owned and maintained solely by women, whose agricultural production in the past was extremely limited owing to a lack of water.

"Before, this land was dry, and we grew only enough to feed the community," says a 43-year-old woman named Aicha. "After the RRP installed the water system, we not only have food to eat but extra money to buy things like furniture for our homes."

A five-year initiative launched in 2005, the RRP ranks as the most comprehensive recovery programme in Sudan, with ten locations nationwide. It is managed by UNDP, which partners with over 40 non-governmental organizations, the Government of National Unity and the Government of Southern Sudan. Funding, which stands at \$81.75 million, comes mainly from the European Commission.

Treasure in a cookie jar

In Tuaakin, a small and sleepy village in River Nile State, a ten-day food processing course was organized in January 2008 by the non-governmental organization African Charitable Society for Mother and Child Care to train women in food processing. They were taught how to make cookies, jams, syrups and juice.

"I had no income, and not much to do," said Alwaia Ahmed Elnigai. "So when the opportunity to take the food production training course came up, I decided to go."

Little did she know that the training would give the 35-



Women at UNDP farming project in Arbaat, Red Sea State.

year-old mother the skills needed to run a small business as well as more income to support her children.

After the course ended, Alwaia discovered that she had a knack for making cookies. "I bought a bit of flour, a bit of sugar and step by step, my creations improved," she said.

She brought her sweets to the local market. As the demand grew for her baked goods, she took special orders from members of the surrounding communities and delivered them by bus.

A year ago, Alwaia expressed a wish to expand her business. "Being able to make my own money gives me a sense of independence that I never had before," she said.

In August of this year, the project gave Alwaia an oven she had requested. As a result, she was able to save the money she had previously spent to rent an oven and use the cash to buy a refrigerator and increase her overall production. Now she meets the

demand for cakes and biscuits in all the surrounding villages. ■

Story and photos: Jaime Jacques, UN Development Programme

Vegetables and goats

The Recovery and Rehabilitation Programme (RRP) focuses on community-driven development rather than handouts and quick fixes, according to UNDP Communication and Advocacy Officer Jaime Jacques.

With initiatives across Sudan, the RRP places a strong emphasis on agriculture. Several projects have demonstration gardens where community members can get seeds and learn how to grow food.

For example, community members in the Upper Nile State town of Renk were trained in cassava and moringa production and local restaurant owners taught how to prepare these nutrient-rich vegetables. Both are traditionally grown in West Africa, but they have proven to be suitable for the climate of Southern Sudan.

In Blue Nile State, the RRP provides goats to the poorest households headed by women. Ms. Jacques said that many of the beneficiaries were war widows struggling to meet their children's basic needs.

"The goats provide fresh milk and yogurt on a daily basis," she noted. "The women must agree to give the first offspring to another needy family in the village, ensuring community ownership and sustainability."

In Central Equatoria State, RRP works with the Ministry of Agriculture to train communities in harvesting and marketing fruits and vegetables. They no longer have to depend on Ugandan and Kenyan imports that are often sold at inflated prices. "The overarching idea is to provide rural communities with the knowledge and tools needed to be self-sufficient," said Ms. Jacques.



Alwaia displaying her sweets at Tuaakin Community Centre.

SCANTY RAIN AND TRIBAL CONFLICT

A map of food security conditions across Southern Sudan identifies 16 counties where between 25 and 40 per cent of the local population currently face severe food shortages.

Three of those counties are located in Upper Nile State. A combination of factors has created the need for an estimated 6,900 metric tons of food relief assistance for its residents in 2009.

As with other drought-stricken parts of the region, scant rains have been a major cause of the present food deficit in Upper Nile State. It received 245.3 millimeters of rainfall between May and July of this year, a 40 per cent drop from precipitation levels for the same period in 2008.

But the state has also been one of the leading flashpoints of tribal clashes in Southern Sudan this year. Ongoing violence has sharply reduced farming activity in some areas and also hampered efforts to deliver emergency food supplies to needy communities.

That was highlighted on 12 June when Jikany Nuer militiamen opened fire on a World Food Programme (WFP) convoy of 27 barges loaded with food, which was earmarked for the town of Akobo in neighbouring Jonglei State.

The convoy had left the Upper Nile State town of Nasir that morning and was heading up the Sobat River when the daylight attack occurred. At least 40 crew members and soldiers of the Sudan

People's Liberation Army were killed in the assault and much of the 735 metric tons of food supplies was looted.

Security conditions have improved significantly in the Sobat River corridor since then. The WFP succeeded in delivering 17 metric tons of food to residents in Nasir and Akobo in September.

WFP officials plan to distribute 2,350 tons of food aid to Upper Nile State over a five-month period ending in December. But they warn that a resurgence of tribal fighting along that river and in other parts of Upper Nile State could sabotage future relief operations as happened last June.

"The increase in tribal fighting that we have seen in this region in recent months could derail recovery and rebuilding efforts that we are supporting," said WFP Public Information Officer Amorcecille Almagro.

The general scarcity of food throughout Upper Nile State is reflected in market price trends. A 90-kilogram sack of sorghum that was selling at 110 Sudanese pounds in the state capital of Malakal last March was fetching 140 Sudanese pounds



Dr Onwar Adeng, FAO Malakal Team Leader.

by July, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

But that 27 per cent rise in the price of sorghum pales alongside the going rate in the less accessible town of Nasir, where consumers have paid up to 280 Sudanese pounds for the same quantity of the cereal.

FAO has worked with eight partner non-governmental organizations in the state this year to identify 10,000 farming households in need of assistance.

Located in nine of the state's counties, these farmers have received 128 metric tons of crop seeds, 164,000 kilograms of vegetable seeds and 32,000 agricultural hand tools.

Dozens of ploughs and treadle pumps and 170,000 fishing hooks and spools have also been delivered as part of a campaign to give the targeted households a chance to cultivate different kinds of crops or try their hand at fishing.

"FAO's concern has always been to diversify the livelihood options of disaster-prone communities so they are able to cope with disasters and raise their own food," said FAO Malakal team leader Onwar Adeng.

For those communities who are more dependent on livestock for their survival, FAO has shipped over 135,000 doses of animal vaccines to Upper Nile State this year and provided funds for the training of 27 community animal health workers in the counties of Renk, Melut and Maban.

"The livestock situation has started to improve," said Mr. Adeng. "However, the threat of diseases is still a concern." ■



FAO Office in Malakal.

Story and photos: Imelda Tjahja

NUTRITION GLOSSARY

Based on the World Food Programme's website and the Food and Agriculture Organization's Integrated Food Security and Humanitarian Phase Classification Reference Table

MALNUTRITION is a condition in which an individual's physical function is impaired to the point where he or she can no longer maintain natural bodily capacities such as growth, pregnancy, lactation, learning abilities, physical work and resisting and recovering from disease. The term covers a variety of problems ranging from being dangerously thin (see Underweight) or too short (see Chronic Malnutrition) for one's age to being deficient in vitamins and minerals or being overweight and obese.

day; and there is a collapse in the affected area's employment and income-generating opportunities.

ACUTE MALNUTRITION (wasting)

is the result of sudden weight loss due to insufficient food intake and/or disease. In severe cases it can lead to death in children because it increases the risk of infection and can cause vital organs to stop working. Calculated by comparing a child's weight-for-height with a reference population of well-nourished and healthy children, it is often used to assess the severity of emergencies.

CHRONIC MALNUTRITION

(stunting) reflects shortness-for-age and is calculated by comparing the height-for-age of a child with a reference population of well-nourished and healthy children. It develops over a long period of inadequate food intake and/or repeated infections. Almost one third of all children worldwide are stunted, according to the March 2008 Thirty-Fifth Session of the UN Standing Committee on Nutrition. Out of 178 million children under the age of five who suffer from stunting, 57 million live in Africa, 112 million in Asia and 9 million in Latin America.

UNDERWEIGHT is measured by comparing the weight-for-age of a child with a reference population of well-nourished and healthy children.

FAMINE is the state of a population in which the number of acutely malnourished children in a given location is greatly above its normal level and represents more than 30 per cent of the population under the age of five. Mortality rates are very high, defined as at least two deaths per day in a population of 10,000; a person's food access is far below 2100 kilocalories per



DYNAMICS OF FOOD SECURITY

Six months after the Sudanese government expelled 13 international non-governmental organizations from Darfur, *In Sudan* spoke with Yvonne Forsen, head of the World Food Programme's (WFP's) Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping Unit, to learn about food security in the strife-torn region.

How do you define food security and when does someone become food insecure?

At the World Food Summit in 1996, food security was defined as a state "when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life".

Someone becomes food insecure when that person no longer has access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food. This may be a temporary or chronic situation.

Did the March expulsion of the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) affect food security in Darfur to a lesser degree than WFP had feared?

Yes, it has not had an impact on food security from what we can see from our monitoring. When the NGOs were expelled, WFP took over food distribution from them; it was very difficult, but it was done. This ensured that beneficiaries received their food aid entitlements.

However, when you look at the other skill sets of expelled NGOs – health, nutrition, water and sanitation – that's where the event really had an effect. These services are much more difficult to take over because you need to have staff with those technical skills.

What was the reason for launching the Food Security Monitoring System and what

can you learn from it?

We started the system in Darfur in 2009 and we do four rounds a year during different seasons. The main reason is that WFP needs more regular information on food security than what we were able to provide earlier. Food security is dynamic, it changes over time. When we did a large-scale assessment last November, we saw that the seasonal impact was larger than we had expected, and it became very timely to set up the monitoring system.

You finished the third round in August. What have you found?

In August we went to 1,600 households in different locations in Darfur, which are the same in every round so that we can compare the trend. From the recent analysis, it seems that the food security trend has improved compared to May when data showed that residents were faring worse than internally displaced persons.

One underlying factor in the improvement is that WFP started to provide seasonal support to residents, as it is the time of the year when stocks would be depleted. Another factor in the



Yvonne Forsen.

improvement is that at this time of the year, households are also engaged in agricultural labour, so the income levels of households have actually improved.

What are the system's main indicators?

We ask people about their main income source, the expenditure patterns – what are they spending money on and in what proportion, which is then used as a proxy indicator for income as it is very difficult to ask a household how much money they earned.

We also ask them about their food consumption in the past week, coping strategies, food aid they receive and what they use it for and if they are selling it, why they are doing that. Market price monitoring is something that WFP does on a weekly basis and is used in the Food Security Monitoring System as well.

Are you able to tell how many people are food insecure in Darfur?

No, the monitoring system is not statistically representative for Darfur and we do not claim to monitor a representative sample. We monitor 22 locations in West Darfur, 20 in South Darfur and 16 locations in North Darfur for the different community types they represent and their geographical coverage.

Are you planning to start a food security monitoring system in Southern Sudan?

We already started a pilot in Warrap and Northern Bahr El-Ghazal states in June 2009, and the monitoring system will be expanded to priority states in 2010, with three rounds a year, not four, mainly due to access difficulties during the rainy season. ■





Caroline Timon Ohure. Photo: UNMIS/Tim McKulka

A SOLDIER'S STORY

Caroline Timon Ohure

After the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005, Ms. Lomiang crossed the aisle and joined the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), a decision largely driven by her desire to remain in the southern part of the country.

She was the star attraction at the 10 June launch of the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programme in Juba as the only female ex-combatant to formally lay down her arms at that ceremony.

"I am happy to return to civilian life again so I can rebuild myself and focus on my education and family, who were torn apart during the war," Ms. Lomiang said in a recent interview. "I can recall how dangerous war was to human life, and any small attack meant a lot of bloodshed."

One of her daughters has followed

in her footsteps, serving as a second lieutenant in the SPLA, but Ms. Lomiang insists that her own days as a soldier are over. She hopes to obtain a degree in community development at the University of Juba in two years' time.

"I love this country and I love peace," she said. "We have handed over our guns to the government, and we are going to use our experience to support our government and help the communities to develop."

As of mid-September, over 2,100 ex-combatants had been processed under the DDR programme in Juba. Ms. Lomiang, who has now entered the reintegration phase of the programme, says she needs funds to cover her university tuition bills and pay her children's school fees.

For all her responsibilities and harrowing wartime experiences, Caroline remains remarkably young at heart. "When I see my children playing, I sometimes find myself going into the game," she said. "My children will laugh and say, 'mama ita biga ajus' ('you are now too old to play' in Juba Arabic)." ■

Emmanuel Kenyi

As a teenager growing up in the Eastern Equatoria State capital of Torit, Caroline Timon Ohure Lomiang wanted to become an attorney. She was one of the relatively few girls in Southern Sudan able to pursue her studies to the secondary school level.

Ms. Lomiang had completed 11 years of formal education when civil war erupted in Sudan in 1983, interrupting her studies and derailing her lawyerly ambitions.

She found work as a clerk and secretary in government offices before joining the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) in 1992. But she still recalls fondly her years as a student.

"Mathematics and geography were my best subjects during my primary and secondary school days," said the 45-year-old mother of five. "When I was young I loved playing netball, football and other outdoor games."

She rose to the rank of captain in 1997 and served in the Eastern Equatoria State Legislative Assembly for five years as a member representing the SAF. She was transferred to military intelligence after her stint as a lawmaker ended in 2002.

"I am happy to return to civilian life again so I can rebuild myself and focus on my education and family"



Ms. Ohure with her youngest child outside family *tukul* (mud and straw hut). Photo: UNMIS/Samson Liberty.

OVER 46,000 PATIENTS

William Kak Adowien's herd of eight cows and 18 goats is his family's economic lifeline. When the school fees of his eight children fall due and he needs to buy them new uniforms, Mr. Adowien sells some of his livestock to raise money.

But to draw a good price, the 57-year-old herder needs healthy animals. A veterinary hospital opened by the UNMIS Indian Battalion in the Upper Nile State capital of Malakal three years ago has been a godsend for him and thousands of other owners of livestock in the area.

Mr. Adowien has brought ailing animals to the hospital for medication and treatment on four separate occasions, and he spares no words in expressing his gratitude to its staff.

"The Indian peacekeepers are improving the health and quality of production of the animals in Malakal and the surrounding areas," he said. "The hospital has helped me a lot and continues to provide me with medicine for my animals."

The veterinary hospital has treated over 46,000 goats, cattle, donkeys and other domesticated animals since it opened its doors in June 2006 in conjunction with the Upper Nile University faculty of veterinary medicine and the Upper Nile State government's department of animal



Lt. Col Sukhbir Singh with Moses, a vet assistant in Malakal.

resources.

Staffed by four Indian soldiers, the facility can perform a number of surgical operations like castration and abdominal hernia procedures as well as administer anti-tick spray and de-worming medication.

Over 20,000 animals have been treated in temporary veterinary camps in the Unity State capital of Bentiu, the Jonglei State capital of Bor and the Upper Nile State towns of Nasir and Melut.

The success of the original hospital in Malakal led to the opening of a small, UNMIS-run veterinary clinic in Bor last February. A similar facility is operating in the city of Kadugli.

"Livestock plays a pivotal role in food security," said Lt. Col. Sukhbir Singh, the director of the Malakal hospital, who arrived in Sudan last April. "It strengthens social ties and helps families keep their heads above water in times of hunger or trouble."

On average, the hospital staff treats between 50 and 60 animals a day for a variety of ailments ranging from respiratory infections and digestive illness to nasal catarrh and reproductive problems.

The hospital also provides ongoing training to over a dozen aspiring paraveterinarians from Malakal and surrounds. A three-week-long refresher training course was held for 19 certified community animal health workers

in Malakal last July.

In addition, it offers practical training for fourth-year students of veterinary science at the local university.

"The Indian army has a tradition of providing a healing touch to strife-torn (areas) wherever they operate," said Lt. Col. Singh, who has 15 years of experience as a veterinarian and personally takes part in classes covering various aspects of livestock management, reproductive health, breeding and preventive medicine.

Bekry Ali Nur recently brought his sick donkey to the veterinary hospital. "It wasn't feeding or drinking water, and they gave the donkey drugs," said the 24-year-old native of Darfur. "(The donkey) is the only resource I have to cater for the needs of my aging father and mother back home in Nyala. Without the treatment from the UNMIS staff, the animal would have been lost."

Another beneficiary of the veterinary hospital is Paromi Ayul Adokjok, a 35-year-old butcher who buys ailing cattle that are brought to Malakal from remote rural areas. The treatment his animals receive at the hospital has enabled Mr. Adokjok to fatten up nearly 100 bulls and slaughter or resell them at a tidy profit.

"When these animals reach Malakal, they are very weak because of the distance they have covered and limited feeding along the way," he said. "The drugs given to me by the Indians prove to be very important." ■

Story and photos: Francis Shuei Diu



William Kak Adowien receiving medication from Indian vet in Malakal.



Local population receiving free drugs during a vet camp in Melut.

A STATE UNDER SIEGE



UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator Ameerah Haq talking to IDPs in Yambio.

Attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Western Equatoria State intensified during August and September 2009, leading to increased displacement of civilians and the evacuation of aid workers from the state's border areas.

The armed forces of Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Government of Southern Sudan launched

At least 11 attacks have been reported since August, including seven in the first week of September alone. Many of the displaced civilians have fled their farms and sought safety in and around the state capital of Yambio

a joint offensive against the LRA on 14

December 2008. Code-named Operation Lightning Thunder, the offensive took place after more than two years of peace talks between the LRA and the Ugandan government had failed to produce a breakthrough, mainly owing to rebel chief Joseph Kony's refusal to sign a final agreement.

The operation failed to capture Mr. Kony, but triggered a resurgence of LRA attacks across the region. Since then, tens of thousands of Sudanese citizens have been internally

displaced and more than 18,000 refugees have arrived from neighbouring DRC and the Central African Republic, according to the Office of the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Sudan.

After a lengthy lull in armed attacks, the LRA has recently stepped up its operations against civilian targets in Western Equatoria. At least 11 attacks have been reported since August,

including seven in the first week of September alone. Many of the displaced civilians have fled their farms and sought safety in and around the state capital of Yambio.

The displacement of civilians has exacerbated an already fragile food security situation in the region. According to UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Sudan Ameerah Haq, who visited the area in early September, many of the attacks targeted food distributed to the affected populations. Ms. Haq stressed that more security was required to ensure that food relief did not become a magnet for more rebel raids. ■



Man recovering from gunshot wound sustained during LRA attack on Ezo.

Story and photos by Tim McKulka

“WHEN EVERYTHING IS GONE”

The torrential rains of late August that turned much of Khartoum into pools of brown water are still being felt several weeks later.

The squatter community of Soba Aradi remains awash in flood water and strewn with trash and rubble from the mud-brick hovels that were destroyed during the storms.

Located 15 kilometres southwest of the Sudanese capital, Soba Aradi sits on land belonging to the University of Khartoum, and most of its buildings are slated for “re-planning”, a euphemism for demolition.

“We are not building our houses but waiting it out until the re-planning,” said Justin Juma, a primary school teacher from Eastern Equatoria State who has been living in Soba Aradi since the mid-1990s.

An estimated 21,000 families lost their



Primary school teacher Justin Juma with collapsed housing in background. Photo: UNMIS/Eszter Farkas.

homes as a result of the heavy downpours. Besides Soba Aradi, the squatter communities of Mayo and El-Haj Youssef also suffered extensive damage.

These communities are mainly populated by internally displaced persons (IDPs). Some of them could only be reached by boat in the aftermath of the rains.

“We found people sitting in the streets without any shelter and with nothing to sleep on,” said Iman Shankiti, an emergency coordinator of the World Health Organization who visited the stricken areas. “We’ve seen them drinking from the rainwater. People were really upset.”

To arrest the spread of diseases like cholera and malaria that are borne by contaminated water and insects, a flood task force led by the Humanitarian Affairs

An estimated 21,000 families lost their homes as a result of the heavy downpours.

Commissioner of Sudan was activated. The task force includes Sudanese government ministries, UN agencies, the UN Resident Coordinator Support Office (RCSO) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

UN agencies worked with partners in the NGO community and the Sudanese government to distribute over 7,000 non-food item kits containing plastic sheeting, sleeping mats, blankets and jerry cans.

Primary health care kits and chlorine tablets were also distributed along with bladders of drinking water. The relief operation received strong support from the Sudanese Red Crescent Society and other national and international organizations.

As flood waters have receded in parts of the capital, the rehabilitation of damaged latrines and water distribution points has become an urgent task.

“Partners in the UN and humanitarian community feel that it is important to tackle the developmental dimensions of the problem,” said RCSO Humanitarian Affairs Officer Kai Yamaguchi.

Residents of communities designated for demolition have been offered plots

of land in drier areas like El Rasheed and El Fateh.

The “re-planning” operations are scheduled to begin at the end of the rainy season later this year, according to Voluntary and Humanitarian Work Commissioner Abdalazim Babiker. El Rasheed offers facilities like schools, a police station, five water wells and a health centre that are lacking in Soba Aradi.

But El Rasheed is also 40 kilometres away from Khartoum, where many IDP residents find part-time work. Some Soba Aradi residents are understandably reluctant to move to a more remote location.

One of them is Ismail Abdelrahman, a victim of the flooding who was using twigs to build a room for his family of six on a blisteringly hot day in September.

“We can leave only when everything is gone,” said the native of Darfur. ■

Eszter Farkas



A month after the flooding, much of Soba is still under water. Photo: WHO.



Collapsed parts of housing in Soba. Photo: WHO.

UPROOTED IN JUBA

The frenzied rate of growth that has transformed the cityscape of Juba in the last two years brought with it a familiar symptom of rapid urbanization in developing countries – the growth of shantytowns in the center and on the outskirts of Southern Sudan's regional capital.

The unauthorized invasion of land plots triggered a sweeping crackdown by the government of Central Equatoria State (CES) earlier this year when it deployed bulldozers and security forces across Juba to displace tens of thousands of squatters.

The demolitions outraged many local residents and were criticized by UNMIS in a statement issued last May, but senior state and county government officials stand by their actions.

"Land grabbers take the law into their own hands and distribute land to their own people," said Juba County Commissioner Pios Subek, noting that some of the illegal settlements harboured criminals who preyed on law-abiding citizens. "That blocks the government's access to those areas in cases of insecurity. As a result, the government decided to demolish these crowded residences to aid access."

In some instances, said Lewis Gore of the CES Ministry of Physical Infrastructure, the sites inhabited by squatters had already been designated for new housing developments.

"The demolition exercise will enable the allotment of land to those who have applied (for occupancy) through the right procedures," he said.

The official said the controversial programme was a necessary step to promote peace and stability in Central Equatoria.

But Mr. Gore admitted that the state government has failed to provide alternative land parcels to many families who were displaced by the demolition crews. People who were adversely affected by the crackdown are still seething with anger.

Some question why shantytowns in central Juba neighbourhoods like Buluk were left untouched, while others on the edges of the regional capital were targeted for elimination.

"Why does the government decide to destroy our families up here in the hills of Gudele



Gudele residents whose houses were destroyed reside on rocks.

while leaving a lot of slums in the heart of Juba?" asked Samuel Duku, a former resident of the city's Gudele shantytown. "The government has yet to come down here to assess how displaced people at the grassroots are suffering."

Others say that the health of loved ones deteriorated sharply after they were forced out of their dwellings. Khamis Ramadan's wife died in July during childbirth after the couple lost their home in the vicinity of the city's Konyo-Konyo market last February.

"My wife passed away due to anemia because the conditions were not favourable for a pregnant woman," said the widowed father of five.

A chief in the Gudele area of Juba confirmed the human costs of the demolition exercise.

"Children and pregnant women are suffering too much, and drastic cases of

common colds, malaria and pneumonia (afflicting) children have been prominent," said Kugi-Gudele *boma* (area) chief Egre Ladu. "Women who are very often exposed to rains have a high risk of premature births."

Some uprooted people warn of a political price that office seekers may have to pay in next year's elections.

"We are suffering, but this is not the end of the story," said Julius Taban. "The suffering will be portrayed in the elections when these same demolishers are kneeling down entreating us for votes."

There is no quick-fix solution on the horizon for the homeless families of Juba. Any government decision to provide land parcels to former shantytown residents would not remedy all their problems, given the high cost of building materials.

"Even if they give us new plots, we cannot afford to put up new structures because we had used the few resources we had to build these (demolished) houses," said Eruaga Wilson.

"Before the demolition, we used to have breakfast and two meals a day," he added. "But now there is a total lack of everything (and) we only eat once a day. We have been brought to a total fiasco." ■



Pupils coming back home from school to their temporary shelter in Konyo-Konyo.

Story and photos:
James Sokiri

THE SHOWCASE OF JUBA

London has Big Ben, Paris has the Eiffel Tower and New York has the Statue of Liberty. A strong case can be made for the Nyakuron Cultural Centre as the leading architectural icon for the Southern Sudanese capital of Juba.

Built in the 1970s as a gift to the region from the country's then president Jaafar Nimeiri, the cultural centre has emerged as the top venue for high-profile events in Southern Sudan.

The facility has hosted the annual Miss Malaika beauty pageant, the second convention of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) in May 2008, and the formal launch of the MTN mobile phone company in Southern Sudan.

Major African recording artists who have performed live on its stage include the Ugandan crooner Chameleon, the Congolese techno-Soukous music star Awilo Longomba and Southern Sudan's very own hip-hop sensation Emmanuel Jal.

On the day *In Sudan* visited the cultural centre in mid-September, its management team was busy with preparations for an evening function that would celebrate the 2009 International Day of Peace.

Later that month, the centre welcomed delegates to a four-day All Political Party Conference organized by the SPLM.

The main person in charge of the

facility is Lam Tungwar, the centre's managing director and successful musician who launched his own album "Call the President" from its stage earlier this year.

"Such is the nature of business here," said the managing director, who is universally known by his first name Lam. "We are always very busy handling a diverse range of client requests."

The centre was originally envisioned as a venue for promoting the culture of Southern Sudan. Its construction was financed by the Saudi billionaire Adnan Khashoggi, according to former Nyakuron manager Joshua Abok.

The building fell on hard times during the country's long civil war, becoming a hangout for criminals and homeless people.

The Sudan Armed Forces tried to occupy the premises in 1993 and brought in tanks and other equipment at one point, said Mr. Abok. But quick intervention by the then state governor averted a military takeover.

With the advent of peace in 2005, the cultural centre was handed over to the Central Equatoria State Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports.

The state government has leased the facility to a local firm called Bros and Company Limited for 20 years, said the ministry's director general of culture and folklore Frezer Kenyi.

Managing director Lam said that nearly \$2.2 million has been spent on the refurbishment of the cultural centre thus

far, and Bros has been at the forefront of that project.

Thanks to the renovation work, the building now boasts two conference halls that can sit over 500 people each instead of the single large auditorium that existed during the war years.

The centre also has a theatre with a state-of-the-art computerized sound and lighting system, a large screen and a seating capacity of 2,000.

Movies have been shown at the venue, and management recently signed a contract with the South African film distribution company Nu Metro to exhibit the latest feature-length blockbusters.

Once used mainly for the staging of cultural art and drama festivals targeting local schools, Nyakuron Cultural Centre has become more commercially oriented in recent years.

But Lam, a founding member of the Southern Sudan Artists Association, said that two offices and a studio had been set aside for use by homegrown artists free of charge.

There are also plans to introduce bi-monthly cultural dance festivals and establish an exhibition hall for showcasing traditional artifacts from different tribes and ethnic groups.

"It's about culture, our people and promoting unity in Southern Sudan," noted Lam. ■

Antonette Miday



Front View of Nyakuron Cultural Centre
Photo: UNMIS/Emmanuel Kenyi.

SCHOOLS' OUT FOR TEACHERS

One of Southern Sudan's oldest teacher training institutes in the Western Equatoria State town of Maridi closed its doors earlier this year after running out of food for students living on its premises.

The principal of The National Teachers Training Institution (NTTI) for primary schools, Isaiah Wani Noah, says the institute needs help from the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) before resuming classes, which were suspended last April.

An incoming class of aspiring teachers numbers about 200 students. The school trained over 70 primary school teachers between 2005 and 2007 under a certificate program administered by Juba University and the GoSS Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

The institution's staff of 13 tutors and support personnel offers training in a variety of academic subjects ranging from English and Arabic to philosophy, psychology, mathematics and music.

But of Southern Sudan's six primary teacher training schools, only the facility in the Eastern Equatoria State *payam* (township) of Loa, Baher el Ghazel in Lakes State, Makuac in Jonglei and Panliet in Warap state are currently open.

Other training schools like Maridi have halted classes owing to a shortage of food and basic services like water and electricity. Budget cutbacks and the region's acute shortage of qualified instructors have prompted the GoSS to reduce the number of teaching positions across the region.

Nevertheless, officials say there remains a pressing need to maintain teacher training programmes to avoid a continued scarcity of credentialed instructors in the future.

According to Olweny Sebastian, a procurement inspector in the GoSS Ministry of Education Science and Technology, the region's financial crisis has prevented the government from supplying food to institutions. But the ministry has called for a tender to carry on supplying food to NTTIs in Southern Sudan.

The procurement inspector added that

GoSS Minister of Education Science and Technology Job Dhoruai had presented the NTTI food case to the southern Council of Ministers and it was currently awaiting discussion. The ministry was aware of the problem and was trying to address it.

The Maridi training institution's principal, Mr. Noah, who joined the faculty in 1990, said the school had operated normally until this year, when funding that had been supplied by several NGOs and later by the GoSS ran out.

NGOs that have supported the school include International Aid Sweden and Care International, which have furnished food and stationery supplies. The United States Agency for International Development has donated furniture and computers, and the Education Development Centre provided a generator as well as many books for the institution's library.

The sudden closure of the school in April took students like Liya Jackson by surprise, but she says she is ready to return to the institution if and when it reopens. "The students are willing to come back if the school administration makes any announcement about resuming classes," said Ms Jackson.

Emmanuel Khamis completed the school's two-year course of study in 2007, but has been unable to find a paying teaching job in the last two years. Lack of electricity

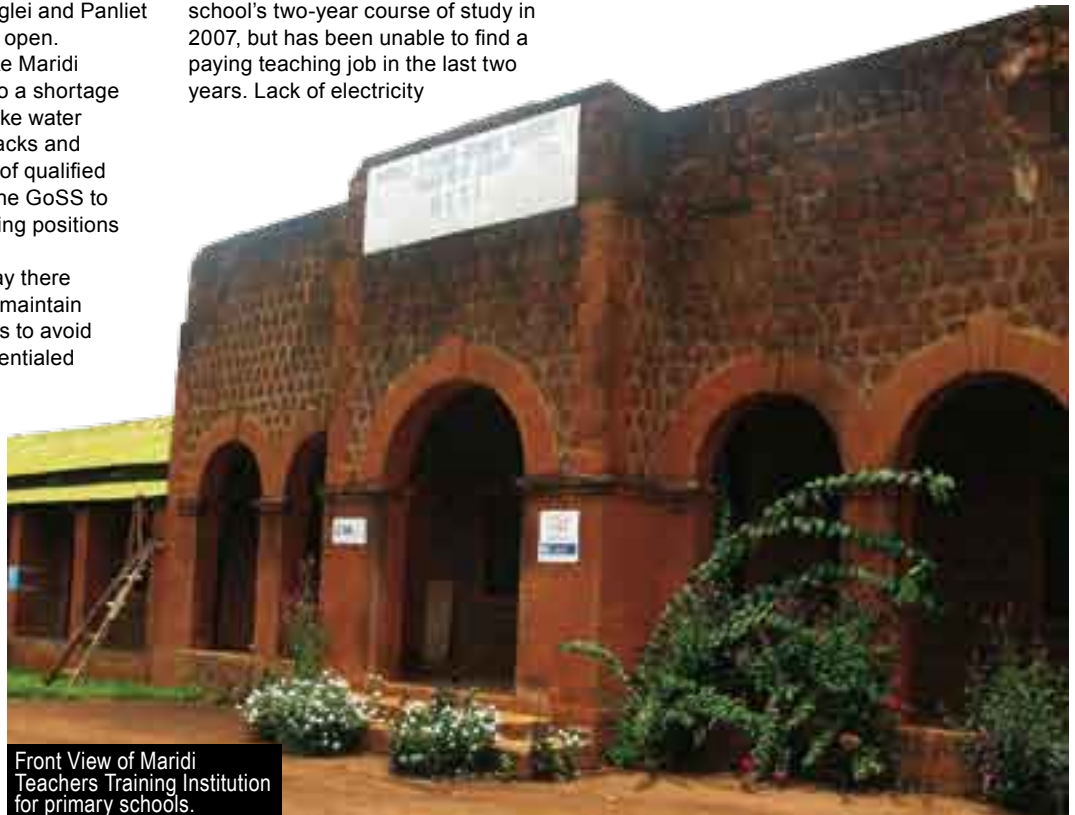
and inadequate stationery supplies were among problems he encountered during his time as a student at the institution.

The World Food Programme (WFP) delivered beans, 124 sacks of maize and 24 tins of cooking oil to the school in August. But institution officials say they need more food stocks before they can offer a full semester of instruction to student boarders. They hope to receive a fresh consignment of WFP food in September.

According to the Maridi institution's principal Noah, NGO assistance began to dry up in 2005, and the GoSS then assumed primary responsibility for funding the school. "If the GoSS could contract another organization to continue supporting the institution, it will be much better," he said. "Things are currently getting out of hand."

To raise money for fuel needed to run the school generator, officials have begun charging users for internet access, photocopying, scanning, typing and printing services. ■

Story and photo: Paiyo Charles Angelo



Front View of Maridi Teachers Training Institution for primary schools.

NEWS BRIEFS

DDR forum held in Rumbek

A one-day sensitization forum was held by the Southern Sudan Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) Commission in Rumbek on 10 September.

Scheduled prior to the formal launch of the first DDR programme in Lakes State in mid-October, the forum took place at the UNMIS compound in Rumbek, drawing 35 participants ranging from religious leaders and youth group representatives to officers of the Sudan People's Liberation Army.

"It is important to have a forum like this because the process has an impact on the development of the country," said Philip Kot, Lakes State Director of the Southern Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission.

The forum featured a video on the DDR programme and presentations about the role of key actors in its implementation.

Over 300 ex-combatants are expected to participate in the inaugural ceremony of the Lakes State DDR programme this month.



Sector commanders meet in Wau

UNMIS' military sector commanders held their 17th conference in the Western Bahr El Ghazal State capital of Wau on 16 and 17 September.

Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sudan Ashraf Qazi and UNMIS Regional Coordinator for Southern Sudan David Gressly also attended the two-day event.

The assembled commanders evaluated the performance of the peacekeeping mission's military contingents in their ongoing efforts to support implementation of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

"We are here to discuss issues related to the mission," said UNMIS Force Commander Major-General Paban Jung Thapa. "And as military, we are able to form our task and move forward, taking into consideration upcoming challenges, especially the important benchmarks that are pending."

Addressing insecurity in Southern Sudan, the Force Commander identified the gun culture as a continuing problem, calling on the Government of Southern Sudan to seek a greater commitment to peace and development from the general population in the region.

Gearing up for voter registration



A five-person assessment team of officials from the Central Equatoria State High Committee (CESHC) and UNMIS staff members visited several proposed voter registration and polling centre sites in various locales during a seven-day period ending on 25 September.

Team members encountered widespread interest in the voter registration process, which is scheduled to begin on 1 November, but they also detected low levels of understanding in some rural communities about upcoming national elections scheduled for April 2010.

The assessment team also heard concerns from some citizens that possession of a national identity card might be required before they would be included on the voters' roll.

The high committee's returning officer for elections, Hezekiah Jonathan, sought to allay those anxieties by advising citizens that prospective voters who do not possess an official identity document could still be registered in their respective bomas (areas) with the consent of their traditional chiefs.

