

BRIEF ON VIOLENCE AFFECTING CIVILIANS

HIGHLIGHTS

- In the third quarter of 2021, at least 801 civilians were directly affected by violence. This represents a decrease of 37 per cent as compared with the same period in 2020, largely attributable to an overall decline in violence in Jonglei and the Greater Pibor Administrative Area (GPAA).
- The vast majority of violence was geographically concentrated in 54 *payams* (11 per cent of the 510 *payams* in the country), where more than 92 per cent of victims were documented.
- Violence involving Azande and Balanda militias allegedly affiliated with conventional parties to the conflict, primarily in the Tambura area of Western Equatoria, accounted for 44 per cent of victims.

CONTEXT

This brief presents an overview of trends in violence affecting civilians in the third quarter (Q3) of 2021, by assessing four major forms of individual harm (killing, injury, abduction, and conflict-related sexual violence/CRSV). While the impact of violence extends beyond these forms of harm, they have been the most common incidents documented throughout the conflict in South Sudan.

Sources of information include victim and eyewitness accounts, as well as reports from secondary sources identified during field missions by the UNMISS Human Rights

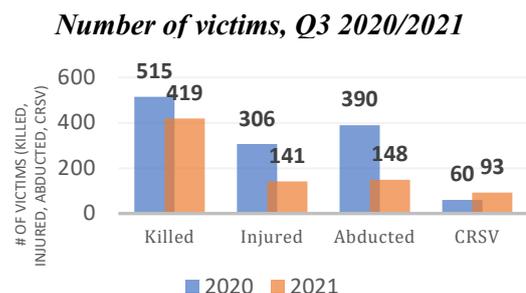
Division (HRD). All reported incidents, particularly those involving sub-national violence, are deconflicted with incidents documented by the UNMISS Civil Affairs Division (CAD).

In accordance with its UN Security Council mandate, UNMISS has issued this brief as an advocacy tool to reduce the impact of armed violence on civilians. UNMISS also continues to urge the Government to investigate human rights violations and abuses, and hold all perpetrators accountable.

GENERAL TRENDS

In line with the trends documented during the first half of 2021, HRD continued to document an overall decrease in the number of violent incidents and civilian victims in Q3, as compared with the same period in 2020. Between July and September 2021, there were 260 incidents (289 in 2020) involving at least 801 victims (1,271 in 2020) subjected to one of the four major forms of harm. This represents a 10 per cent decrease in the number of incidents and a 37 per cent decrease in the number of victims as compared with Q3 2020. It is important to note, however, that HRD's capacity to comprehensively document the

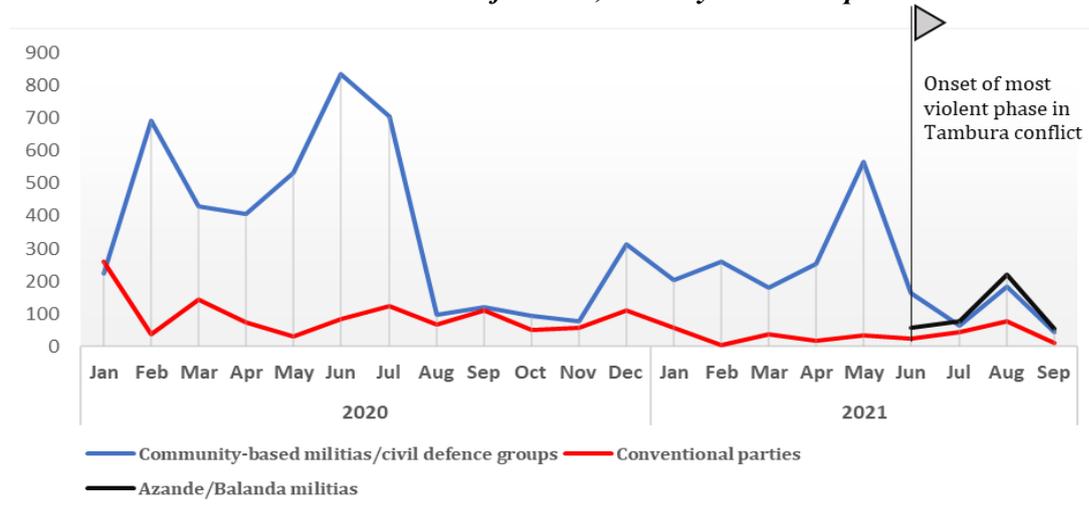
number of victims affected by armed violence continued to be impacted by access restrictions, which may have resulted in under-reporting in the number of incidents and victims.



As illustrated by the above chart, killings decreased by 19 per cent (from 515 to 419), cases of injury by 54 per cent (from 306 to 141), and abductions by 62 per cent (from 390 to 148). By contrast, CRSV cases rose by 55 per cent (from 60 to 93). Violence involving militias from the Azande and Balanda

communities, allegedly affiliated with conventional parties to the conflict, in the Tambura area of Western Equatoria, accounted for the greatest number of victims (44 per cent), closely followed by other civil defence groups and/or community-based militias (37 per cent).

Trends in the number of victims, January 2020 to September 2021

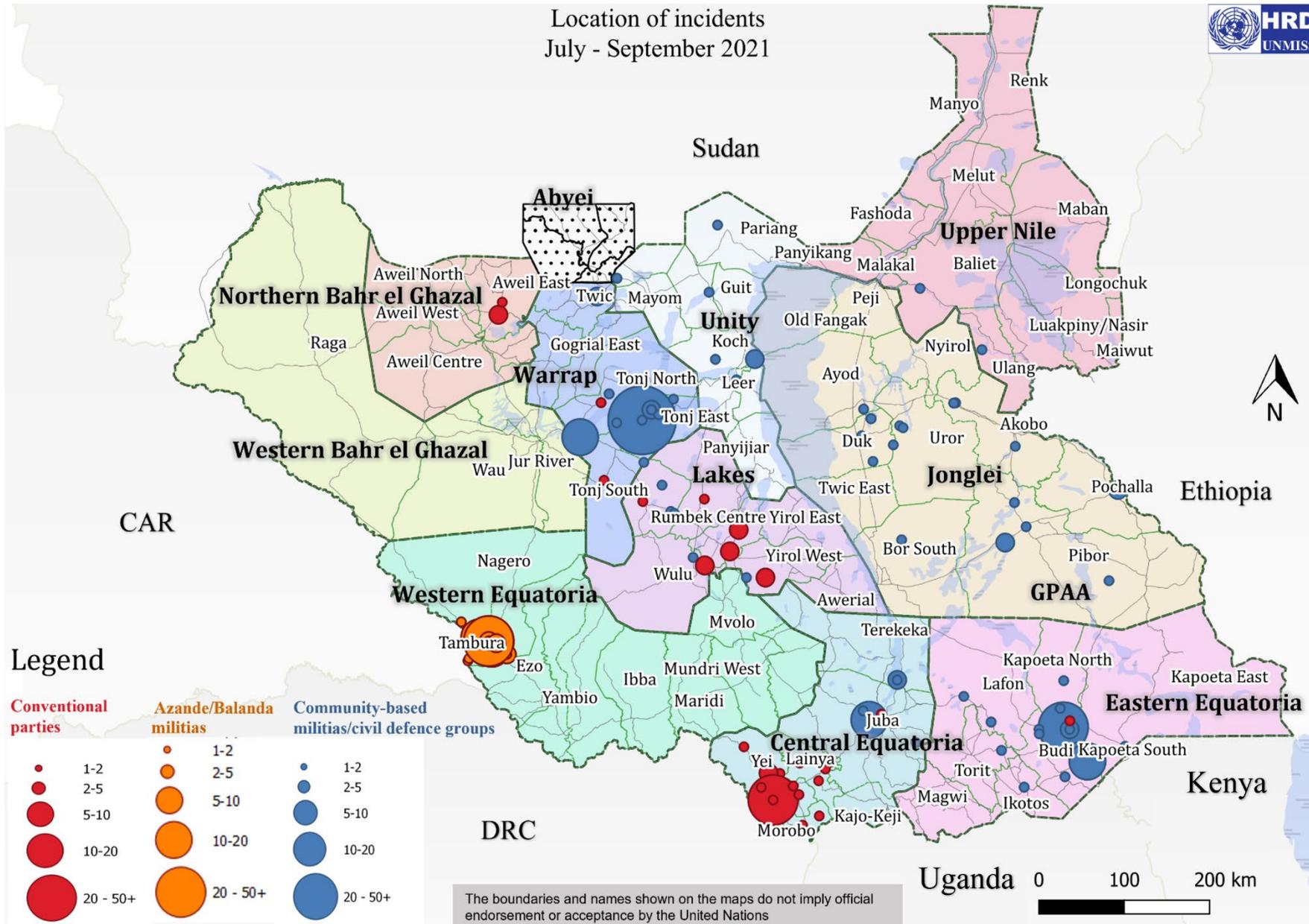


During the reporting period, violence against civilians surged in the Tambura area of Western Equatoria. These incidents involved militia elements from the Azande community, allegedly affiliated with SSPDF forces led by Maj. Gen James Nando on the one hand, and militia elements from the Balanda community allegedly affiliated with elements of the pro-Machar Sudan People’s Liberation Army in Opposition (SPLA-IO/RM) on the other, accounted for 44 per cent of all victims documented. In Q3 alone, attacks by these perpetrators resulted in at least 240 civilians killed and led to the abduction of at least 46 others (including six women and 14 children). CRSV was also prevalent during the conflict in Tambura. HRD has thus far documented at least 59 victims (including men, women and children) in this context. In addition to these forms of individual harm, the violence resulted in loss, privation and displacement of thousands of civilians. According to humanitarian sources, an estimated 80,000¹ civilians were displaced as a result of this violence.

Outside of the Tambura conflict, incidents involving conventional parties to the conflict were triggered primarily by tensions between the SSPDF and the National Salvation Front (NAS), largely concentrated in the Greater Yei and Lainya areas of Central Equatoria. During the reporting period, NAS allegedly abducted 78 civilians (including four women and seven children) from these locations.

¹ https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/ocha_tambura_conflict_flash_update_1.pdf

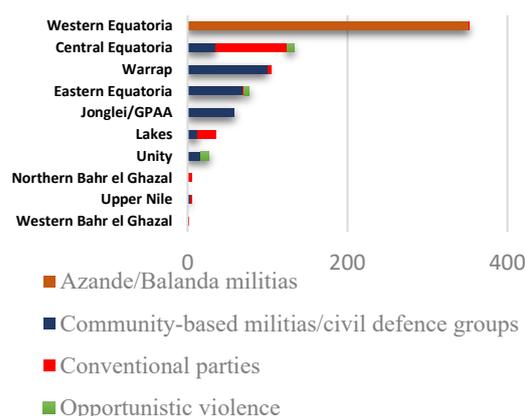
Location of incidents
July - September 2021



GEOGRAPHIC TRENDS

Violence affecting civilians during Q3 of 2021 was concentrated in four main areas, which accounted for 82 per cent of all victims documented throughout South Sudan. Western Equatoria was the most affected (44 per cent of victims), followed by Central Equatoria (18 per cent), Warrap (14 per cent) and Eastern Equatoria (10 per cent). Western Equatoria and Central Equatoria were primarily affected by violence involving conventional parties to the conflict and militia elements allegedly affiliated with these parties, while Warrap and Eastern Equatoria were impacted by violence involving civil defence groups and/or community-based militias. However, it is important to note that this violence was concentrated in specific *payams* (sub-divisions of counties), with 54 out of 510 (11 per cent) *payams* accounting for more than 92 per cent of victims. For instance, 40 per cent of all victims of killing, injury, abduction and CRSV were documented in eight (out of 47) *payams* in Western Equatoria.

States most affected by violence



Continued violence between Dinka sub-clans in Warrap, concentrated in nine (out of 47) *payams*, amounted to 12 per cent of all victims documented in Q3. Similarly, clashes amongst Toposa, Lotuko and Logire armed elements concentrated in eight (out of 53) *payams* in Eastern Equatoria accounted for eight per cent of all victims documented in the reporting period.

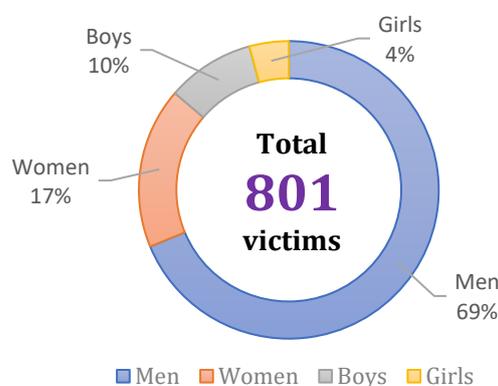
VICTIMS

Men continued to account for the majority of victims (69 per cent or 551 individuals), followed by women (17 per cent or 140 individuals) and children (14 per cent or 110 individuals).

According to HRD's findings, the vast majority of men were killed or injured (79 per cent), primarily in the context of sub-national violence. Seventeen per cent were victims of abduction, including for the purposes of forced labour and/or forced military recruitment, and four per cent were subjected to CRSV.

Women were primarily subjected to CRSV (47 per cent), killing (39 per cent), and abduction (9 per cent). Seventy-four per cent of these CRSV cases occurred in the context of violence in Tambura. It is important to note that UNMISS has reason to be concerned that women and girls were subjected to sexual violence in cases of abduction as well.

Victims, by age and sex



Children were primarily killed (54 per cent), in nearly all cases in the Tambura area, while 39 per cent were abducted. Eight girls were confirmed as having been subjected to CRSV.

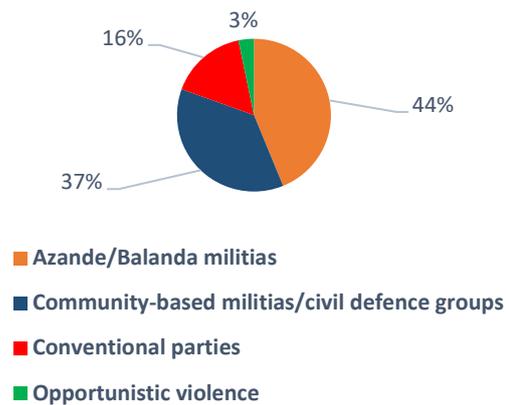
PERPETRATORS

The largest single category of perpetrators in Q3 was comprised of Azande and Balanda militias allegedly affiliated with conventional parties to the conflict, who were responsible for 44 per cent (351 of 801) of all victims. The fluid nature of these groups, which may have been used as proxy armed elements, makes attribution to conventional parties difficult. At the same time, HRD found that these actors were engaged in a specific conflict in Tambura with linkages to broader political conflict in South Sudan. Accordingly, HRD has distinguished between these perpetrators and other civil defence groups/community-based militias elsewhere in the country, which vary in the degree of their nexus to the conflict in South Sudan.

Other community-based militias and/or civil defence groups were the second largest category responsible for harm to civilians, accounting for 36 per cent of victims (294 of 801). Violent incidents involving these groups decreased by 68 per cent (921 to 294) compared to the same period in 2020, largely due to a reduction of conflict in Jonglei and the GPAA.

Government forces and organized armed groups were responsible for at least 16 per cent (130 of 801) of victims documented. However, it is important to note that some of these perpetrators may also be linked to the Azande

Victims, by category of perpetrator



and Balanda militias in Tambura, and therefore this number may not fully account for the role of conventional parties in the Tambura conflict.

HRD also documented a relatively small number of incidents by unidentified but related armed elements, which do not fall specifically within one of the two categories described above, but which bear a link to the conflict based on the suspected perpetrators, location, modus operandi, and other factors. These actors were primarily engaged in opportunistic violence, and were responsible for three per cent of all victims (26 of 801) recorded between July and September 2021.