

Humanitarian Information Needs Community Voices Bulletin

November - 2023 / Issue #2

Malakal South Sudan



PHOTO: A CEN community correspondent collecting feedback from Malakal POC Site Listening Group members during a meeting. | © CEN

Supported by the World Food Program (WFP), Internews is working with the Community Engagement Network (CEN) to respond to community information gaps, concerns, and needs at the Malakal Transit Centre, camps and the POC. The collaborative intervention aims to improve the efficiency of the humanitarian response to the Sudan Crisis in South Sudan by providing a safe and accessible two-way information platform. It connects refugees, returnees, and host communities with verified and actionable information from humanitarian responders to connect the community with services, elevate community voices, and inform decision-making. This project serves thousands of people displaced by the conflict in Sudan, Internally Displaced People, and the local host community in Malakal County, Upper Nile State in South Sudan.

FEEDBACK COLLECTION

The Internews humanitarian information service involves a continual process of listening and two-way communication with the community and humanitarian responders.

Community Correspondents collect feedback, questions, and concerns from community members each day through one-to-one and group discussions. We ensure a diverse range of voices is heard and provide an alternative for community members who may not feel comfortable, or may not know how, to approach humanitarian actors with their feedback directly.

FEEDBACK ANALYSIS

Concerns, complaints, and suggestions raised by refugees and returnees highlight the urgent need for focused attention on some humanitarian services. Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) emerges as the most prominent concern, with 25.9% of the raised issues directed toward inadequate services in this area. Notably, 15.5% of the concerns revolve around issues related to protection, signaling a pressing need for safeguarding measures and support for vulnerable populations.

If you want to contribute to this bulletin or discuss our data please contact:

Senior Humanitarian Program Manager (Ikrivchenia@internews.org), Humanitarian Media Advisor, Tuslime W. Romeo (Akiiki) (atusime@internews.org), Program Manager, Philip James Lukudu (Philip.James@cen-ss.org), Malakal, Upper Nile, South Sudan.

Health constitutes 10.9% of the highlighted problems indicating the necessity for improved healthcare services and access. While nutrition, food rations, and distribution collectively contribute 15% of the concerns, they indicate a need for enhanced food support systems. The needs and challenges faced by returnees emerge as a critical aspect requiring attention and targeted assistance reflected in 9.7% of the raised issues. Beyond these key areas, smaller percentages highlight concerns about livelihoods, shelter, child protection, sports, and civic education, among others.

FEEDBACK HIGHLIGHTS

FOOD DISTRIBUTION, NUTRITION AND CASH ASSISTANCE

With all the persistent challenges the refugees and returnees are facing, the steady dedication revolves around key areas like food distribution, nutrition, cash assistance, and several other areas of humanitarian endeavor. Through feedback collected from diverse sources within the affected population, a fairly informative overview of the present circumstances emerges. This complex understanding empowers humanitarian agencies to design precise and effective strategies tailored to meet the urgent needs of the crisis-hit people.

Returnees and residents in the Malakal Protection of Civilians (PoC) site express urgent concerns about the absence of school feeding leading to dropout rates in the PoC, requests for varied food items like CSB++ Plump nut and nut oil, confusion about entitlement ages for nutrition food, unregistered children missing out, and pregnant mothers lacking support. Approximately 60% (9 out of 15 cases) emphasize the need for better nutrition for children and pregnant women.

Regarding food rations, concerns are primarily about inadequate food rations, especially for returnees from Sudan, leading to borrowing and sharing, hunger, and requests for increased rations. Nearly 80% (16 out of 20 cases) focus on insufficiency or absence of food rations for families and returnees. Feedback on food distribution highlights delayed distribution, space constraints during distribution, and an appeal for consistent support. About 25% (3 out of 12 cases) stress the urgency of timely and efficient food distribution.

Issues about cash assistance involve delays in accessing the funds, suggestions to separate cash support from food distribution and acknowledgment of assistance for schoolgirls. Approximately 20% (3 out of 15 cases) highlight delays and the need for better timing and organization.

PROTECTION

Concerns from refugees and returnees in Malakal POC and Malakal Town regarding protection issues highlight several prevalent concerns. Approximately 35% of the feedback emphasizes the rising crime rates

including instances of theft, gang activities, and nighttime security threats within both the PoC and town areas. There's a pressing need for increased patrols and interventions to address alcohol-related issues contributing to insecurity.

Around 15% of the feedback focuses on gender-based violence (GBV) concerns and the need for increased awareness programs. Roughly 20% of the feedback underscores the necessity for safety measures, such as installing solar lights, creating awareness of the dangers of smoking substances like 'Bango,' and promoting peaceful co-existence among youth to prevent conflicts.

A smaller percentage (~10%) highlights the need for practical measures, like installing fences at transit centers, providing tools for grass cutting to prevent snake encounters, and emphasizing the importance of fire safety awareness during the approaching dry season. Requests are directed toward various UN and humanitarian agencies, emphasizing the need for their involvement in addressing security issues, providing awareness programs, and reinforcing Community Watch Groups.

HEALTH

The feedback from refugees and returnees in Malakal POC and town highlights several critical health challenges. Security concerns, such as attacks on healthcare staff, stand out prominently, impacting access to medical services. The main concerns include the closure of a health facility due to safety issues, inadequate health education, and the absence of essential resources like ambulance services and mosquito nets.

Additionally, there's a need for comprehensive health education programs, particularly for pregnant women and returning populations, emphasizing the importance of vitamins, mental health awareness, and disease prevention methods like malaria control. Essential resources such as mosquito nets are also crucial requirements.

Improving security measures, enhancing health education initiatives, providing essential resources, and establishing closer healthcare access points emerge as vital areas where the community members identified needs.

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WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)

The feedback from IDPs, refugees, and returnees in Malakal POC and town regarding WASH activities underlines critical issues. Approximately 45% of the concerns revolve around inadequate or dysfunctional toilets, causing unsanitary conditions and health risks. Another 25% highlight water-related challenges, including insufficient supply hours and low pressure, affecting both hygiene and daily tasks. Garbage accumulation, impacting about 15% of the feedback, poses health hazards and necessitates regular collection. Soap and hygiene kit shortages, constituting 10% of concerns, directly affect personal hygiene upkeep.

Some specific requests include a demand for renovation, emptying full toilets, and provision of alternative options. Simultaneously, people requested the improvement of water supply duration and pressure, along with regular garbage collection, stand as crucial priorities.

RETURNEES

The major challenge, expressed by a significant percentage of returnees who provided feedback, revolves around the prolonged stay and delays in transportation to their places of origin. Nearly 60% of the feedback on onward movement emphasizes the urgency for faster transportation arrangements. This includes concerns about insufficient food supplies at the Transit Centers, the need to carry more belongings during transport, and the distress caused by prolonged waiting periods, spanning from 10 to 16 days, without progress.

There's an appeal for better communication regarding transport options. Some returnees said they could see more air transport departures but information about river transport came in trickles. There is a desire for efficient distribution of humanitarian aid such as sleeping materials and increased food rations to sustain families during these waiting periods.



COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

The Community Correspondents record and share the community concerns with the relevant humanitarian agencies for fact-checked responses in a transparent and timely manner. We then close the feedback loop by packaging the questions and answers into the Community Voice programs, which are broadcast in local languages through speakers in places where the community gathers.

NUTRITION

"Most of our children in the PoC, as opposed to those in Malakal town, have dropped out of school because there is no school feeding service.

Female 42, Malakal PoC, Sector 1, Block D

"We do not know the age entitled to receive nutritious food. Some children below 4 year are not receiving the nutrition food items. ."

Female 40, Malakal PoC, sector 3, Block A

"Could more CSB++ Plump nutrition food be distributed to support and feed children?"

Female 34, Malakal PoC, Sector 4, Block A

"I suggest the concerned agencies replace the sorghum with corn because we can consume corn even without cash for grinding.

Female 26, Malakal PoC, sector 4, Block D

"The oil distributed be changed to nut oil because nut oil is good for cooking food."

Female 31, Malakal PoC, sector 1, Block B



PHOTO: A CEN Correspondent getting feedback from refugees at Bullukat Transit Center, Malakal Town, Upper Nile State - South Sudan.
© Community Engagement Network.

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WFP Response:

WFP and partners work with the community leaders to identify the vulnerable and give them priority during food distribution. The PCC and community leaders are therefore requested to continue supporting the distribution team in identifying the vulnerable as it is WFP policy to give them priority at the distribution point.



PHOTO: WFP staff registering and distributing High Energy Biscuits to returnees and refugees at the Transit Center in Bullukat, Malakal Town, Upper Nile - South Sudan. | © CEN

Food Distribution

Some returnees from Sudan say they are not receiving monthly food rations. They request they get registered for food. For now, they are sharing food with relatives, yet the supplies are not adequate.

Malakal PoC, Sector 2, Block P

A returnee said they entered the PoC, and got registered but have only received nutrition food for children. She requested for food rations to stem hunger.

Female 39, Malakal PoC, Sector 1A, Block C

"Our food rations were finished because we shared them with our relatives who arrived from Sudan. We request the concerned agencies to help and register us so that we can get our own food to avoid hunger and starvation."

Female 37, Malakal PoC, Sector 2, Block M

WFP Response:

WFP food assistance is targeted. Currently, for returnees from Sudan, registration is done at the entry point in Renk and places of final returns. Registration for the camp-based population (POC & Malakal town) is done by IOM. WFP lean season response for 2023 has ended and there are no more registrations ongoing.

Cash Assistance

"Delayed cash assistance for grinding mills complicates our livelihood. We suggest cash assistance be given immediately after general food distribution."

Female 49, Malakal PoC, Sector 4, Block B

"We heard that cash support for grinding mills will be distributed along with the November 2023 food distribution. Let the concerned agencies separate the two months' distribution."

Female 30, Malakal PoC, sector 4A

"We thank Food for the Hungry for registering our schoolgirls to get cash assistance. We encourage the organization to continue supporting our schoolgirls."

Female 47, Malakal PoC, Sector 2 block W

WFP Response:

Simultaneous cash and in-kind food distribution is normally done. However, whenever there are delays with the cash component due to operational reasons, beneficiaries are informed accordingly. WFP will try its best to ensure that cash and in-kind distributions happens at the same time.

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PHOTO: A CEN Nile FM correspondent collecting feedback from an IDP Listening Group meeting in the New Area. | © CEN

WASH

"We thank IOM for distributing dignity kits. The items will help in managing female personal hygiene."

Female 21, Malakal PoC, Sector 1A, Block D

"We get water supply for only two hours each day. This is not enough for collecting water. We request additional hours for water collection."

Female 38, Malakal PoC, Sector 2, Block N

"The water pressure is very low. We suggest the concerned agencies work on the water pressure so people can get enough water in the block."

Female 33, Malakal PoC, Sector 2, Block N

"An announcement has come from community leaders requesting the community to organize themselves to clean public toilets according to the tents in the blocks. The reason is because the concerned agency does not have funds for the activity. We are concerned this idea may not work."

Male 35, Malakal PoC, sector 4C,

"We heard that the responsibility of cleaning toilets will be handed to the community. This may become problematic because there will be no respect and seriousness since no payment will be made to people who will do the work. We request the cleaning arrangement reverts to the old system."

Male 33, Malakal PoC, sector 2, Block P

PROTECION

Domestic violence within families is on the increase. There were requests for awareness so that families can live in peace and harmony."

Female 35, Malakal PoC, sector 4C, New Area

PROTECTION

"We request strict security checks at the PoC entrance gates because some youths sneak drugs into the site, they smoke, and fight each other."

Male 40, Malakal PoC, Sector 1, Block A

"We suffer at nighttime because the new place lacks illumination. We request the concerned agencies to install solar lights around the PoC site."

Female 53, Malakal Town, New Area

"The security situation is not good in the camp because the young people who came from Sudan fight the PoC youth. We request the camp management, and the community leaders to handle this issue."

Female 47, Malakal PoC, Sector 2, block M

SHELTER

"We appreciate DRC and other agencies that surveyed Sector 2 and got space for returnees from Sudan, now residing in the PoC."

Male 40, Malakal PoC, Sector 1, Block B2

"Before the rainy season, some tents were repaired but ours were not. We request the restoration of our tents to reduce inconveniences during and after the rainy season."

Female 53, Malakal PoC, Sector 1, Block F

"We are crowded in a dilapidated tent. We request for more tents so that each family can be independent."

Male 55, Malakal Town, Trist Center – Bullukat

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BIOMETRIC REGISTRATION

"We request the concerned agencies to inform us why they are not registering families who came from Sudan upon entry into PoC. They have been sharing the meagre rations with their relatives because they have none."

Male 45, Malakal PoC, sector 2, Block P

WFP Response:

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RETURNEES

"We have been informed that when being transported to our places of origin by air, only 20 kilograms of our belongings is needed. We request the concerned agencies to allow us to carry more kilograms, because we do not relatives to keep the property that will remain or else, we are forced to sell our items."

Female 30, Malakal Town, Trist Center - Bullukat

"We see air transport is the only one in operation each day. We request the concerned agencies to tell us what is happening to boat transport."

Female 30, Malakal Town, Trist Center - Bullukat

"When we arrived at this center, we were told that after three days we would be transported to our places of origin. It's now ten (10) days and there is no sign of any travel arrangements. We request the concerned agencies to remain committed to their promises to avoid misunderstandings and quarrels at the transit center."

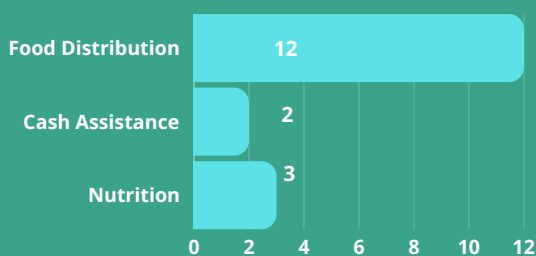
Male 40, Malakal Town, Trist Center - Bullukat

"We are almost two months here. We do not know the reason for the long stay. We want to go to our relatives in Unity State."

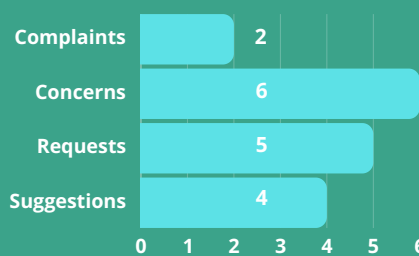
Female 35, Malakal Town, Transit Center

FEEDBACK ON WFP HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

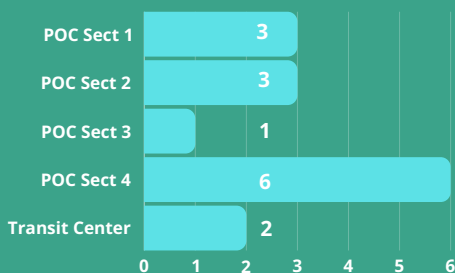
Number of people talked to between Nov 1-15 2023



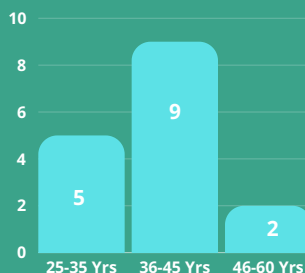
Type of feedback on WFP services collected between Nov 1-15 2023



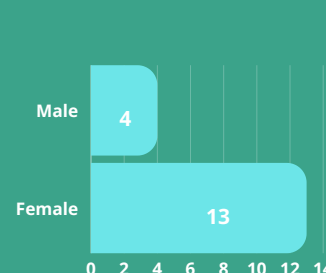
Number of locations where CEN collected feedback Nov 1-15 2023



Age groups of people who talked about WFP Humanitarian Services



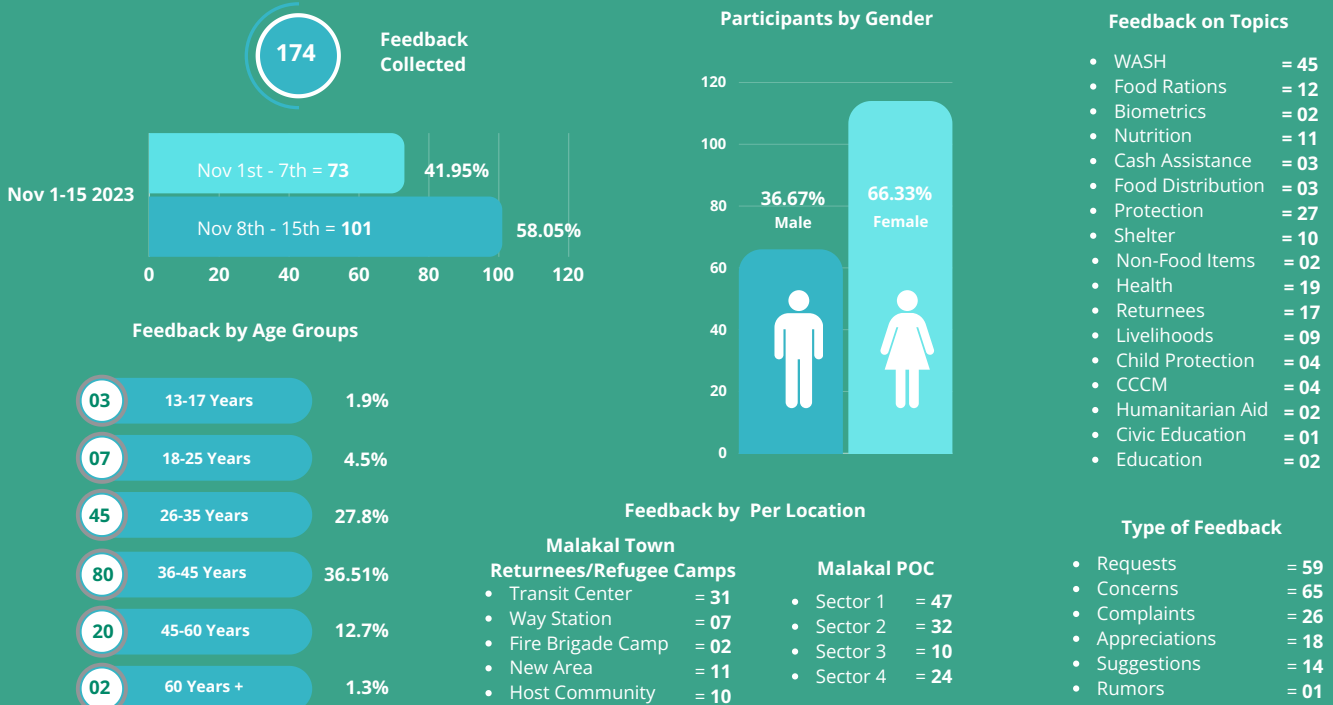
People talked to by gender



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FEEDBACK ON GENERAL HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE



The Community Engagement Network (CEN) has Community Correspondents in Malakal who constantly engage the refugees and returnees to get feedback about their concerns.

They collaborate and coordinate with humanitarian agencies on relief aid to the affected populations.

The content is produced into broadcast of the Boda Boda Talk Talk programs.

You can share information with us and respond to community complaints, questions and concerns through the **Community Voice** program.

Contact Philip Lukudu on Philip.James@cen-ss.org, or our Community Correspondents in Malakal.

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