

# Humanitarian Information Needs Community Voices Bulletin

October - 2023 / Issue #1

## Malakal South Sudan

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.

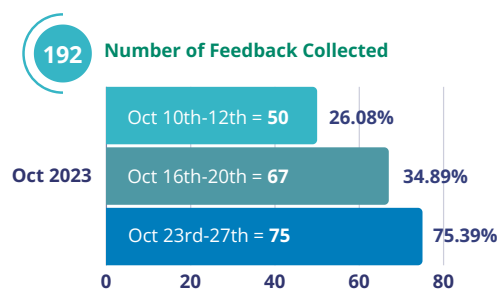


PHOTO: A CEN Community Correspondent collecting feedback at a Food Distribution site in Sector 4, Malakal POC. © CEN

### 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 by Age Groups



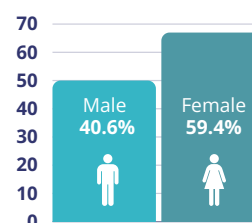
#### Feedback by Per Location

Malakal Town	
Returnees/Refugee Camps	
• Bullukat Camp	= 25
• Daniel Comboni Camp	= 06
• Fire Brigade Camp	= 23
• Food Distribution Site	= 07
• SOS IDP Campa	= 02
• New Area Camp	= 07
Protection of Civilian (PoC) Site	
• Sector 1	= 72
• Sector 2	= 29
• Sector 3	= 08
• Sector 4	= 12

#### Type of Feedback Collected

• Requests	= 74
• Concerns	= 72
• Complaints	= 24
• Appreciations	= 23
• Suggestions	= 16
• Rumors	= 01

#### Participants by Gender



#### Feedback on Topics

• WASH	= 36	• Non-Food Items	= 07
• Food Rations	= 21	• Health	= 07
• Biometrics	= 20	• Returnees	= 04
• Nutrition	= 18	• Livelihoods	= 02
• Cash Assistance	= 16	• Youth	= 02
• Food Distribution	= 15	• Infrastructure	= 02
• Protection	= 15	• Women	= 01
• Food Items	= 10	• Agriculture	= 01
• Shelter	= 08	• Education	= 01

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

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

## Feedback Highlights

### Concerns About Insufficient Food Rations

In recent feedback collected from Protection of Civilian (PoC) Sites, returnees, and refugee camps within host communities, 61.2% of respondents expressed significant concerns about insufficient food rations. Women were particularly affected, with 58% of them highlighting inadequate rations as a pressing issue. One 27-year-old woman resident in Malakal PoC emphasized that the current food rations are unable to sustain families for an entire month and was curious about criteria used by WFP to calculate allocations.

Additionally, 9.6% of respondents, forced by the shortage, resorted to alternative means to supplement their food supplies, while some returnees found shelter with relatives already residing in PoC sites. The noticeable absence of knowledge concerning the management of humanitarian aid highlighted a potential information shortage within the affected communities, particularly in relation to the appropriate utilization of allocated food rations.

Furthermore, concerns were raised about the unauthorized sale of humanitarian aid by traders in local markets, prompting questions about why people would rather sell than use their food assistance. Through feedback collection, it seems that aid supplied is mainly exchanged for cash or for items like sugar and other things not distributed by humanitarians.

Amid these challenges, approximately 10% of respondents expressed gratitude for the aid received, acknowledging the provision of essential items such as sorghum, lentils, and cooking oil.

Lastly, a rumor about impending reductions in food rations is circulating, deepening anxieties within these communities. Addressing these concerns and raise awareness about aid allocation and use remains crucial to ensure the well-being of aid recipients.

### Challenges in Adopting CSB++ Child Food Nutrition

The transition from Plumpy Nut, the original ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF) for child nutrition, to CSB++ child food nutrition raised challenges evident in feedback gathered from PoC, returnee, and refugee camps. Numerous people remain unfamiliar with CSB++ fine flour, requesting guidance on its preparation. Some report children experiencing stomach upsets after consuming this nutritious food.

A 35-year-old woman at the Fire Brigade Returnee camp in Malakal expressed confusion over the change in supplied

food, highlighting the need for better communication and clear guidelines for aid recipients regarding the new food. Additionally, concerns were raised about some children missing out on nutrition support due to incomplete biometric information and inadequate ration distribution. These issues call for further sensitization of how decisions are made for nutrition services and improved distribution strategies.

### Rising Market Prices Drive Demand for Increased Cash Assistance

Feedback from community members highlights a pressing need for an increase in cash assistance, primarily attributed to the escalating market prices. The key driver behind these requests is the surging costs associated with grain grinding. In several cases, people reported a substantial reduction in their assistance, significantly impairing their ability to cope.

Families are increasingly reliant on cash assistance to address diverse needs, such as supplementing their nutritional requirements, procuring essentials like charcoal and soap, and establishing small businesses. The challenges they face underscore the imperative for a more comprehensive approach to support their livelihoods.

### Enhancing Dignity in Aid Distribution for Vulnerable Beneficiaries

Provision of food, nutrition supplements, and cash assistance are done in a dignified and secure manner. However, some concerns surfaced regarding the challenges faced by vulnerable people. Specifically, older individuals in Sector 1 Block C Malakal PoC highlighted difficulties encountered during food collection. Previously, the system prioritized families with seven or more members, with older and vulnerable members. The recent mode of food distribution policy has led to prolonged queues and lengthy periods, particularly impacting those unable to stand for extended durations.

One seventy-year-old male resident expressed the need for a separate queue for older individuals, emphasizing the importance of accommodating their physical limitations. Furthermore, feedback revealed instances where older recipients, when paired with younger aid beneficiaries, faced challenges as their rations were sometimes taken by others, leaving them with nothing to take home. To address this, people advocate for being served alongside their agemates, ensuring fair and respectful distribution.

These insights underscore the necessity for a more inclusive approach in aid distribution, one that recognizes and caters to

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

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

## Feedback Highlights

the specific needs of vulnerable populations. By adopting tailored strategies such as separate queues for older people and age-appropriate pairings

These insights under score the necessity for a more inclusive approach in aid distribution, one that recognizes and caters to the specific needs of vulnerable populations.

### Good Hygiene Means a Better Life

In the recent survey conducted for our humanitarian bulletin, a pressing issue emerged: 40% of respondents voiced concerns regarding challenges with water and sanitation. Among the collected feedback, 21% highlighted the worrisome state of latrines, affecting internally displaced persons, returnees, and refugees. The deteriorating facilities were identified as a leading cause of unhygienic conditions in both Protection of Civilians (POC) areas and refugee camps, sparking fears of potential disease outbreaks.

The survey pinpointed various obstacles hindering access to essential services. Inadequate water supply, stemming from low pressure in taps, limited hours of water rationing, and broken facilities, emerged as the primary barriers. Furthermore, the issue of open defecation, notably raised by returnees and refugees from Sudan, exacerbates the sanitation crisis. Addressing this challenge necessitates initiatives to promote domestic hygiene, clear blocked drainages, and manage garbage effectively.

### Addressing Rumors and Misinformation

In Malakal PoC Sector 2 Block 1, a rumor emerged suggesting a reduction in food rations in the upcoming months. Such a rumor, if left unaddressed, can spiral out of control.

Addressing any rumor in a timely manner is crucial. Unchecked misinformation can worsen the already challenging circumstances faced by people. Effective communication and intervention strategies are essential to dispel rumors and ensure accurate information reaches the community.



PHOTO: A WFP Staff member distributing the energy-giving biscuits to new arrivals at the Transit Center in Bullukat Docking Site, Malakal - Upper Nile. © WFP

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

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



PHOTO: A returnee family sharing their concerns with the CEN community correspondent at the Reception Center in Malakal in Upper Nile.  
© Community Engagement Network.

## 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.

### Food Rations

*"The food rations we receive cannot sustain us for a month. We do know the criteria WFP uses to calculate the rations per family to support the monthly food consumption."*

**Female, 57, Malakal PoC, Sector 1, Block B**

*"After the distribution of food rations, there is a need for a program to raise awareness of food consumption and the use of supplies sparingly."*

**Male, 35, Malakal Town, Bullukat Refugees & IDPs camp**

*"We thank WFP for the food ration distribution. We heard a rumor from some community members that WFP is to reduce the food rations. We fear this will affect us."*

**Male, 49, Malakal PoC, Sector 2, Block I**

### WFP Response:

WFP provides 50% of the normal ration. This has been necessitated by dwindling resources over the years.

### Cash Assistance

*"We suggest that cash assistance for grinding be given at the same time as food rations."*

**Female, 37, Malakal PoC, Sector 1, Block D**

*"Grinding costs have increased. Can the concerned agencies assess the market costs and consider increasing the cash assistance to meet the extra charges?"*

**Female, 48, Malakal PoC, Sector 1, Block E**

*"Sometimes some food items such as salt are not available during the food distribution. The concerned agencies used to give us money to buy such items from the market. The money is not enough as commodity prices are very high. We need the cash assistance amount increased."*

**Male, 40, Malakal PoC, Sector 1, Block E**

### 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.

The cash for milling and salt is based on weekly market price assessment, hence the monthly transfer value is a reflection of the actual milling cost and salt prices at Malakal Market for that month. WFP has always been adjusting cash transfer value based on the market price.

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

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

### Food Distribution

*"We need a timely and well-organized food distribution routine as any delays expose children to hunger and starvation."*

**Female, 41, Malakal PoC, Sector 1, Block D**

*"We request WFP to issue a three-day notice prior to the general food distribution day. Families that are not aware go for farming to distant places and miss their monthly food rations."*

**Female, 30, Malakal PoC, Sector 1, Block B**

*"We thank the food distribution team for helping pregnant mothers and removing them from the lines during general food ration distribution."*

**Female, 30, Food Distribution Site**

*"The food distribution process is well organized, but we need the concerned agencies to consider the plight of the elderly and people with disabilities (PWD) during the exercise. Could they be given priority to save them from lining and standing for a long time?"*

**Female, 40, Malakal town, Fire Brigade IDPs camp**

### WFP Response

Pre-distribution meetings are normally conducted 3 days before the start of the distribution. In exceptional cases, the notice period might be less than 3 days, but community leaders are normally provided with reasons for those exceptional circumstance and they are asked to mobilize communities accordingly.

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.

### Nutrition

*"The food distribution is going well, we just request the concerned agencies to increase the nutrition of food for our children."*

**Male, 45, Malakal Town, Bullukat Refugees & IDPs camp**

*"Nutrition food is causing diarrhea among our children. What could be the cause? Can we stop serving children nutritious food since we do not know the reasons why it causes diarrhea to them?"*

*"Some families sell children's nutritious food to the traders. This will affect the nutritional status of the children. We need a program to raise awareness among families on the danger of not feeding children with nutritional food."*

**Male, 38, Malakal PoC, 38, sector 1, Block B**

### WFP Response:

- The nutrition ration is provided at 100% and cannot be increased.
- Any overconsumption of specialized nutritious foods can potentially pose a danger to beneficiaries due to excess micronutrients.
- In some cases, over consumption of certain macronutrients like fat can also cause diarrhea.

Awareness creation by the nutrition/GFD workers at all facilities and distribution sites are mandatory before start of screening and during distribution of commodities. WFP will work with nutrition partner (IMC) to strengthen nutrition education in the coming months.

### Food Items

*"We appreciate WFP for distributing nutritious food for our children. We request WFP not to forget the children who have not been receiving their nutritional food."*

**Male, 32, Malakal PoC, Sector 2, Block I**

*"We thank WFP for the food items distributed, though not enough, the food is helping families to survive."*

**Male, 35, Malakal PoC, sector 1, Block D**

*"We thank WFP for the food distributed to us. Can the concerned agency add sugar to the food rations to serve children with morning tea? We do not have enough money to buy sugar from the open market."*

**Female 43, Malakal PoC, Sector 1, Block A**

### WFP Response:

WFP food basket is focused on providing the basic items for survival and saving lives hence, sugar is not part of the food basket.

### Non-Food Items

*"We suggest that WFP supplies us with farming tools to support our farming and avoid food shortages."*

**Male, 35, Malakal town, Fire Brigade IDPs camp**

*"We are requesting any agencies to help us with fishing nets, so we can support our families with extra food instead of relying on humanitarian s- Male, 43, support only."*

**Male 43, Malakal Town Bullukat IDPs & Retunes Camp**

### WFP Response:

Agricultural/fishing inputs provision to the community is not the primary mandate of WFP. However, WFP will channel it to UN-FAO for their feedback. FAO has been providing agricultural/fishing inputs to the communities in Malakal on annual basis.

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

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

### Biometrics

*"There are some people who are living in the camps but lost their cards and are not receiving food rations. Can they be helped with food supplies?"*

**Male, 37, Malakal Town, Bullukat Refugees & IDPs camp**

*"As a refugee, I do not know where people go to register to qualify for food rations."*

**Male, 50, Bullukat Refugees & IDPs camp**

*"I came from Sudan, and I registered and received the first food ration. But when I went for the second food distribution, I was told my name was not in the system. I request the concerned to correct the problem."*

**Female, 35, Malakal PoC, Sector 1, Block C**

*"I thank the concerned agencies for reinstating my child's name on the food nutrition system. She has now received her food nutrition ration after the name was reinstated."*

**Female, 27, Malakal PoC, Sector 4, Block A**

*"We recently came from Sudan and at the POC we got registered and received our food rations, our thanks to WFP."*

**Female, 42, Malakal PoC, Sector 1, Block G**

*"We have newborn babies, and they are not included on the family rations card. We want to know what it takes to have babies on the ration cards."*

**Female, 27, Malakal PoC, Sector 1B, Block C**

*"Since we arrived at the camp, we have not been registered to get our food rations. We request the concerned agencies help and register us so that we can receive humanitarian assistance."*

**Female, 40, Malakal Town, SOS Camp**

### 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 camp-based population (POC & Malakal town) is done by IOM. WFP lean season response for 2023 has ended and there is no more registration ongoing.

### WASH

*"Soap is not enough; we request for distribution of more soap to help in washing clothes and other household utensils."*

**Female, 47, Malakal Town, Bullukat Refugees & IDPs camp**

*"We request the concerned agencies to work on the water pressure so people can get enough water and stop quarrels and fights at the water point."*

**Male, 50, Malakal PoC, Sector 1, Block D**

*"We thank the concerned agency for collecting the garbage in our area. We encourage the organization to continue with the good work."*

**Male, 40, Malakal PoC, Sector 1, Block B & D**

*"We thank World Vision for providing good drinking water to us. We encourage the organization to continue with the good work."*

**Female, 34, Malakal Town Bullukat IDPs & Retunes Camp**

### Shelter

*We are returnees from Sudan and are sharing a small shelter with relatives. We request the concerned agencies to support us with shelters so we can live comfortably.*

**Male, 40, Malakal PoC, Sector 2, Block N**

*"The building materials we received are no longer usable. We suggest concerned agencies supply us with good building materials."*

**Male, 30, Malakal PoC, Sector 1, Block K**

*"We share shelter with our relatives who returned from Sudan, but we are crowded. We suggest concerned agencies provide space for returnees, so they live comfortably."*

**Female, 42, Malakal PoC, Sector 2, Block N**

*"The rainy season affected our tukuls (tents). We request any agency to help with plastic sheets."*

**Male, 40, Malakal Town, Fire Brigade**

### Returnees

*"We lack skills for employment. We suggest concerned agencies train us on vocational skills and other apprenticeships that can get us jobs or employment to help our families."*

**Female, 34, Malakal Town, New Area**

*"We thank the agencies who helped transport us from Renk to Malakal, we will soon have to be transported to our places of origin. We encourage agencies to keep up with the good work as there are many of our people coming and need the same support offered to us."*

**Female, 24, Malakal town, Bullukat IDPs camp**

### Safety & Security

*"We came from Sudan to Renk, then to Malakal. We do not want to stay longer in this camp because we suffer when it rains."*

**Male, 21, Malakal town, Bullukat IDPs camp**

*"We need concerned agencies to raise more awareness on peace and reconciliation."*

**Female, 40, Malakal PoC, Sector 2, Block M**

*"Young people move in groups at night making our lives difficult in PoC. The groups fight and that is a worry for us."*

**Female, 35, Malakal PoC, Sector 1, Block C**

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

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

### Protection

*"Three years back, all four sections in the PoC had solar lighting, but they no longer function. We request the lights be fixed to reduce criminality at night."*

**Male, 50, Malakal PoC, Sector 1, Block H**

*"We have been trained on GBV issues and we will use the knowledge acquired to help our community manage GBV issues and cases. We appreciate IMC for the training."*

**Female, 45, Malakal Town, New Area**

*"We appreciate War Child Holland for helping our children with child-friendly spaces."*

**Female, 36, Malakal Town Bullukat IDPs & Retunes Camp**

### Health

*"We thank the International Medical Corps - IMC for raising awareness in the community on how people living with mental health can be supported."*

**Female, 24, Malakal PoC, Sector 4, Block C**

*"Roaming dogs are common in our area. We request that any agency vaccinate the dogs to prevent an outbreak of rabies and attack on human beings."*

**Female, 40, Malakal Town, New Area**

### Education

*"We appreciate Intersos for renovating Community Primary Schools. We encourage them to continue with the good work in supporting the education and schooling of our children."*

**Male, 40, Malakal PoC, Sector 4, Block C**

### Infrastructure

*"We are happy that PoC roads were cleared and leveled. We thank the IOM's Site Planning Department because the road works will help ease movement within the PoC."*

**Female, 35, Malakal PoC, Sector 1, Block A**

*"The footbridges constructed in 2018 in our blocks have gotten damaged and need to be replaced. We request the concerned agencies to re-construct the footbridges so that our elderly people can move without difficulty."*

**Malakal PoC, Sector 1A, Block A, C & D**

### Livelihoods

*"We are requesting the concerned agencies to help us with vegetable seeds. We want to plant during the rainy season to fight hunger and food shortage."*

**Male, 35, Malakal Town, Fire Brigade**

*"We request training on vegetable growing so that when there is no food for distribution, we can survive on our own garden food."*

**Male, 40, Malakal town, Fire Brigade IDPs camp**

*"We are requesting any agencies to help us with fishing nets, so we can support our families with extra food instead of relying on humanitarian support only."*

**Male, 43, Malakal Town Bullukat IDPs & Retunes Camp**

### WFP Response:

Agricultural/fishing inputs provision to the community is not the primary mandate of WFP. However, WFP will channel it to UN-FAO for their feedback. FAO has been providing agricultural/fishing inputs to the communities in Malakal on annual basis.

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](mailto:Philip.James@cen-ss.org), or our Community Correspondents in Malakal.

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

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