

**WOMEN RIGHTS VIOLATION, PROTECTION ASSESSMENT,
MONITORING AND ANALYSIS REPORT
DECEMBER 2020**

MAIWUT COUNTY UPPER NILE STATE, SOUTH SUDAN
July 2020 - November 2020 FINDINGS



FUNDED BY SOUTH SUDAN HUMANITARIAN FUND (SSHF)

The women are requesting to be treated like human beings

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Coalition for Humanity is a National NGO (NNGO) with its headquarters in Juba. Coalition for Humanity's mission is to save lives, alleviate suffering, built resilience of the vulnerable people, through programmes in Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation, Protection/GBV, WASH, Food Security and Livelihoods, Health and Nutrition through strategies like community capacity building, Social Behaviour Change Communication, market linkages, advocacy and governance to enhance contextualized innovative solutions for service delivery in Emergency Response and Sustainable development in South Sudan. Coalition for Humanity was funded by South Sudan Humanitarian Fund (SSHF) to implement a protection project between June 2020 and May 2021. The project objective was to assess the general protection concerns in Upper Nile Maiwut County. Several meetings were held with women aged of 20 and 50 years. The meetings were held on monthly basis. Each meeting had between 8- 12 participants. The discussions sort to asses any protection concerns. The women were asked questions about general safety and security during distribution of NFIs, WASH related protection concerns, forced child marriage, their role in decision making, domestic violence, intimate partner violence, housing land and property, and the role of women in leadership. This report consolidates findings form 60 female participants of child bearing age randomly sampled across different Payams in Maiwut County, Upper Nile State, South Sudan. A total of 5 focus group discussions were held, and the findings consolidated.

The findings of this report are necessary in raising awareness about challenges women are facing, coming up with redress mechanisms and various interventions. This report is important for humanitarian workers, Protection and GBV sub cluster, WASH cluster, NFI clusters, South Sudan government, ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare and global GBV call to action, the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The women in Maiwut County are feeling unsafe following the internal conflict between sub clans in Maiwut and Jeckow. The parties of the conflict who are armed were mentioned severally as the perpetrators of rape, armed youth were also mentioned. Food and Non-food Items distribution has not been fair, women believe that one must know someone in order to benefit. Elderly, people with disability are left out with no one to fight for them. There is a serious water challenge in the community, the main river in Jeckow is infested with snakes, the wells have limited water and women fight on the queue to fetch water.

Domestic and Gender Based Violence is rampant in the area, most women have no place to report. The community believes women are bought in exchange with for cows, and they are a man's property. In case of rape, girls are forced to marry the man who raped them, this is meant to conceal the shame and the fact that no one wants to marry a girl who the entire community knows that was raped. This level of stigmatization makes women and girls not to report rape. Only ICRC can handle rape cases, elsewhere there is no facility that can handle case management of rape.

Women are not involved in decision making. They are given minor roles in the community. Most roles are inconsequential. Women are preconditioned to fear decision making, lest they make the wrong decision, they would be beaten by men. Women are also not allowed to own land or property.

Recommendations

1. The next project should be integrated, Protection, GBV and Case Management of Rape (CMR)
2. To create a safe environment for women, they suggested construction of more protection community centres, treatment facilities for rape victims as well as justice; the arrest and judgement of the perpetrator
3. Provide a WASH project focusing on hardware, to increase number of boreholes in the county
4. Integrate emergency response with long term social behaviour change communication strategies, with specific focus on sensitization of men, community leaders and local authority on human rights.
5. Initiate a policy that makes it compulsory for gender balance in hiring and leadership positions by percentage.
6. Initiate a policy against any form of GBV, follow through policy implementation at grassroot level.

1.0 FINDINGS

1.1 General Security

Due to the internal conflict that had erupted between Maiwut and Jeckow, women didn't feel safe walking in the community, since there were revenge killings and, in the case, where their family members were involved, in attacking the neighbouring communities they were at risk of being killed. The process of distribution of food took too long hence women's safety was a concern since they would be assaulted on their way back home in the late evening hours. Most women, elderly and people with disability missed out on food and non-food items, this is because they were not prioritized and could not fight on the queue. According to the women, water points were only in Jeckow Ethiopia side. They however feared going to fetch water there because of big snakes in the area that were dangerous. During dry season, wells were a major source of water though a lot of crowding that resulted into conflicts and fighting at water points. Women generally faced a lot violence in the community, they were sexually assaulted during collection of firewood and fetching of water by the army and youths who hid in the forests. Unfortunately, they had no designated places to report their grievances and hence they proposed the need for a women's centre where they would be counselled as well as share their challenges with ease. Women are also victims of intimate and emotional violence from their husbands. Women experience trauma and hunger due to war that leave them in pain and no food.

1.2 Gender Based Violence

Women felt that they encounter more violence in the community as compared to men. Domestic violence is common, occurs mostly when women try to defend their daughters from early marriages and forced marriages planned by fathers. Women reported that they frequently got beaten up by their husbands though some of them believed it was cultural to be beaten. Despite the violence, women persevere because they don't have anyone to report to. Community elders mostly solved the issues only when they involved divorce and men were still favoured. Some women would commit suicide when it gets out of hand and others have been reported to kill the husbands. The community believed men had rights over their wives. Parents often warn their daughters never to report their husbands anywhere about conflicts at household level. It is believed that women are bought with cows and once a woman is married, she was supposed to be a man's property. In most cases, women would keep quiet more especially because of fear for the fact that no one would actually stand up for them not even their own relatives but instead they would accuse them of being the problem. Another reason is that the culture of the communities and South Sudan at large does not condemn such acts. The men in the community tend to bully women just because they are women and have no right to say about anything, so they are not allowed to object or propose anything because the men get angry and end up beating the women. In case of rape, girls are forced to marry the man who raped them, this is because rape is a shameful act and no one would want to marry the girl.

1.3 Role of Women in Leadership and Decision Making

The community has had a belief since time immemorial that women could not lead. As a result, the local authority did not involve women in Jeckow in any leadership position other than the Boma Women's Leader. Culture is a barrier towards effective women participation in meetings and including leadership positions for example, they said that their husbands would never allow them speak in any public gathering or talk in front of the people. Women are not allowed to participate in any decision-making process in the family. Perhaps when it comes to food and taking care of the children at home. They therefore would never attempt to make any critical decisions in the household because they already knew their limits and consequences when they go overboard. They were also not allowed to participate in decision making and or give their opinion concerning certain issues such as revenge killings or marriage. Despite most women having not been educated, they believed they had good ideas that would help the community if they shared in public gatherings. However, this was not possible because they would never be allowed by their husbands to speak in any public gathering or in front of people. Women suggested frequent women empowerment trainings on leadership skills to improve their standards in the community.

1.4 Housing Land and Property

According to the culture of the community, women were not allowed to own any property; house, land or even cows. Culturally they should be under the men who oversee everything including resources. Women can only benefit from family resources but they can never claim ownership. This had resulted into high levels of poverty because men would often decide to add more wives using the same resources and the women would have no authority to talk about it. In cases where a husband passes on, everything is put under the control of a brother in-law. The most frustrating and worse situation came about when a brother in-law inherits the woman. The children drop out of school and getting even a meal a day becomes a problem. A few said they would attempt to inform the brother in laws their frustrations but nothing much came out of it. They also suggested the need for capacity building men leaders, local authorities, opinion leaders, chiefs and church leaders including women on the rights of women. Even if they own land and cows, they do not even have a say on what happens to the property.

1.5 Redress Mechanisms

To create a safe environment for women, they suggested the need for construction of more protection community centres, treatment facilities for rape victims as well as justice; the arrest and judgement of the perpetrators. There is also need to create awareness in the community on human rights targeting men, women, boys, girls, leaders and local authorities would help sensitize the community to understand the important of women involvement in leadership positions. Women also suggested need for frequent women empowerment trainings on leadership skills to improve their standard in community. They also believed that a review to some of the negative cultural believes and practices would help improve on the rights of women. They also suggested on the need to capacity build the local authority on the rights of women. An RI facility in Jeckow helped those who were badly injured though it has no capacity to treat victims of rape. The facility is also very far and most patients are required to use a boat or swim to access services. In case of any rape or physical assault (Relief International and ICRC) stepped in but cannot cover the entire county.

1.6 Conclusions

Most rape cases remain private and are never reported due to the shame that came with it. Women therefore took no action on issues related to violence or sexual assault. A few would get a break by visiting their parents' homes. Women have no one to talk to in the community when they have problems apart from very close friends or parents who most of the time urged them to persevere. This has led to many cases of unresolved domestic violence and assault which makes women choose not to report similar occurrences because nobody cared or took them seriously when they reported. Only ICRC handles rape cases and can not cover the entire county.

1.7 Recommendations

- 1 The next project should be integrated, either protection, GBV and Case Management of Rape (CMR)
- 2 Provide a WASH project focusing on hardware, to increase number of boreholes in the county
- 3 Integrate emergency response with long term social behaviour change communication strategies, with specific focus on sensitization of men and community leaders on human rights.
- 4 Initiate a policy that makes it compulsory for gender balance in hiring and leadership positions by percentage.
- 5 Initiate a policy against any form of GBV, follow through policy implementation at grassroots level.
- 6 Initiate a policy that protects widows who do not have an elder son.
To create a safe environment for women, they suggested construction of more protection community centres,
- 7 treatment facilities for rape victims as well as justice; the arrest and judgement of the perpetrators.

ANNEXES MONTHLY WOMEN FGDs JULY 2020 TO NOVEMBER 2020

Findings from Women August



Maiwut County protection monitoring report
Women FGD

Date: 20th August, 2020

Payam: Jeckow

State: Upper Nile

Introduction

The focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted in Jeckow on 20th August, 2020. Twelve women attended the meeting and the discussions were facilitated by Coalition for Humanity Field Staff based in Maiwut County.

General Security

Women safety was not guaranteed. The process of distribution of food took too long hence women's safety was a concern. Internally Displaced People (IDPS) reported about discrimination and corruption by the host community and the people distributing food. Due to shortage of items being distributed, most IDPs would go home without the items being distributed. The women however suggested that the elderly and people living with disabilities should be given separate places to receive their items so that they would be assisted to go home early.

Women generally faced a lot violence in the community, they were sexually assaulted during collection of firewood and fetching of water. Unfortunately, they had no designated places to report their grievances and hence they proposed the need for a women's centre where they would be counselled as well as share their challenges with ease. To create a safe environment for women, they suggested construction of more protection community centres, treatment facilities for rape victims as well as justice; the arrest and judgement of the perpetrators.

WASH related protection Concerns

According to the women, water points were only in Jeckow Ethiopia. They however feared going to fetch water there because of big snakes in the area that were dangerous to the lives of the people. During dry season, wells were a major source of water though a lot of crowding that resulted into conflicts was reported. There were however less cases of sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual violence, Sexual exploitation and other abuses along the water sources. Drinking men were however mentioned to be a problem to the women during dry season. When sexually assaulted, most women reported the incidences to close relatives though some resorted to committing suicide as a result of shame and trauma they experienced after sexual coercion. Some would keep it to themselves to avoid conflict that would arise as a result of the act. It was however recommended that construction of more boreholes would help reduce the cases because women would travel less to fetch the water.

Domestic Violence

In April, 2019, a woman was killed by her husband due to conflict that arose in the home. The man who was alleged to belong to one of the armed parties to conflict, was drunk when he committed the crime. Most conflicts in a family set up are resolved through dialogue and guidance.

Intimate partner Violence

Most women reported to being beaten by their husbands. Due to lack of proper places to report the incidences, most of the women would resort to divorce and remarry other men or seek refuge in their parents' homes. Some women would not take action when assaulted due to fear of a 'bad name' in the community and threats that would come from the partner.

Child marriage

Cases of early child marriage were common in the community and many young girls are being married off to old men with a similar case having been reported in the first weeks of August, 2020. Fathers were decision makers and arranged marriages for their daughters. Some women would take part in ensuring the girls got married and this would be through making references to other girls in the neighbourhood who would have been married. Most girls would also be mistreated by their mothers as a sign of showing them that they were old to start their own families. However, the women said they were able to stop their children from early marriages through; educating them on the effects of early marriages, supporting the children with the necessary basic needs and listening to them and by ensuring the children went to school. Most women would however not prevent their daughters from early marriage as they feared their husbands because culturally, they are not supposed to interfere with men's plans on issues concerning marriage.

Decision making at home

Women do not make any decisions in the community when men are there maybe when it comes to what food should be eaten at the household level. An attempt to make critical decisions without the knowledge of the husband would lead to possible divorce, though beating or being chased away for a while.

Housing land and property

According to the culture, the women said they were not allowed to own any House, land or even property including cows. Culturally, women can only benefit from family resources but they can never claim ownership. This had resulted into high levels of poverty because men would often decide to add more wives using the same resources and the women would have no authority to talk about it. They however believed that a review to some of the negative cultural believes and practices would help improve on the rights of women. They also suggested on the need to capacity build the local authority on the rights of women.

Role of women in leadership

Very few women were involved in leadership positions and this would be the lowest positions. Women would participate in some activities but they would not be allowed to make any decisions in the community. Most women would also not participate in leadership or decision making because of how the community had positioned them. Women have been believed to work at home, give birth and take care of the family. Most of the women were also not educated and this limited their chances of fighting for their rights. They however recommended on the need to be given chance to leadership and decision making in the community as well as empowerment.

Redress mechanisms

Women had no one to talk to when faced with problems. This is because nobody would even take them seriously so most of them would choose to keep silent with their problems. An example of violence was given and women said they were never assisted even when they reported the various forms of assault. It was also reported that there were no health facilities that would help them when they got raped in the community and this was a big problem to them. Apart from lack of health facilities, other services such as counselling and psychosocial support are also missing.

Summary of findings

- 1 Women have been denied a right to leadership, expression and decision making in the community
- 2 The community lacks proper channels of communication to address issues affecting women

Conclusions and recommendations

- 1 There is a need for case management and psychosocial support services to support victims of sexual assault.
- 2 There is need to empower women through small income generating activities to improve their living standard.
- 3 There is a need of women and girl's friendly spaces to support women and let them express their issues and learn from each other experience.

Findings from Women September



Maiwut County protection monitoring report
Women FGD

Date: 21st September, 2020
Payam: Jeckow
State: Upper Nile

Introduction

The focus group discussion was conducted on 21st September, 2020 in Jeckow Payam. The meeting was attended by 12 women between the age of 24 and 40 years. The discussions were facilitated by Coalition for Humanity Field Staff based in Maiwut County.

General Security

There had been a fight in Jeckow a Payam in Maiwut County, Upper Nile State between the two major clans; Ciewaw and Ciechaany. The cause of the fighting was said to be leadership wrangles over County commissioner position. In January 2020, cattle were stolen and houses burnt down though there had been no cases of revenge killings in Jeckow for quite some time.

There was also starvation in Jekow and internally displaced persons (IDPs) were the most affected and this was attributed to the fighting in January 2020 which led to loss of property.

WASH related protection Concerns

The women said that flooding in the area had worsened the sanitation situation and due to limited number of Boreholes in Jekow payam, people were drinking direct from Sobat River. The general sanitation was therefore very poor. Few people had latrines but the rest practised open defecation. The few latrines that existed had also collapsed due to floods which had weakened the soils.

Domestic Violence

In 2018, there had been a case of domestic violence where a woman decided to leave the husband after a lot of frustrations. They were however reconciled by the chief in Jeckow Boma. Usually, men reported the cases to the chief when their women ran away from home even after brutally beating them. Neighbours were also mentioned to be taking part in report especially where a woman would be mistreated and was not able to report the matter. Children and women were the most affected by domestic violence. The children were often left with their fathers after their mothers left due to violence. Most of them would starve due to lack of food and someone to fend them.

Intimate partner Violence

The women said intimate partner violence was the order of the day. According to them, physical and sexual violence had now become part of life because of the frequency at which it was happening in the community. Men would force them into having sex even when they were not willing and there would be nothing, they would do especially the alcoholic and drug addicts.

Child marriage

According to the women, forced and early child marriages were very common in the community. Husbands/fathers to the girls were the final decision makers concerning any marriage arrangements in the family. They also added by saying that as women, they were never allowed to take any roles in such negotiations.

Decision making at home

Women said they are not allowed to participate in any decision-making process in the family. Perhaps when it comes to food and taking care of the children at home. They therefore would never attempt to make any critical decisions in the household because they already knew their limits and consequences when they went overboard.

Housing land and property

It was very clear from the women that Housing, land and property were things that men owned and not women. Culturally they should be under the men who oversee everything including resources.

Role of women in leadership

It was reiterated that the community had had a belief since time immemorial that women could not lead. As a result, the local authority did not involve women in Jeckow in any leadership position other than the Boma Women's Leader. Culture was a barrier towards effective women participation in meetings and including leadership positions for example, they said that their husbands would never allow them speak in any public gathering or talk in front of the people. Creation of awareness in the community on human rights targeting men, women, boys, girls, leaders and local authorities would help sensitize the community to understand the important of women involvement in leadership positions. They also suggested for frequent women empowerment trainings on leadership skills to improve their standard in community.

Redress mechanisms

It was learned that women had no one to talk to in the community when they have problems apart from very close friends or parents who most of the time never helped other than encouraging them to persevere. This was said to have led into many cases of unresolved domestic violence/assault which had made women choose not to report similar occurrences because nobody cared or took them seriously.

Summary of findings

- 1 Domestic violence affects women and children in Maiwut county
- 2 There are no proper redress mechanisms to solve women issues

Conclusions and recommendations

- 1 Youth and men need awareness and training on the negative impacts of sexual violence, domestic violence, and economic violence.
- 2 There is a need for case management and psychosocial support services in Jeckow Payam to handle GBV cases.
- 3 There is a need for awareness raising sessions targeting men, opinion leaders, chiefs and local leaders on human rights violations and GBV
- 4 There is a need to establish more women and girls' friendly spaces to support women and let them express their issues and learn from each other's experience.
- 5 Men and youth need to be trained on the importance of respecting their wives, consulting them in family affairs and resolving family issues peacefully without quarrelling or becoming violent to their wives.
- 7 There is need to empower women through small income generating activities to improve their standards of living.

Findings from Women October



Maiwut County protection monitoring report
Women FGD

Date: 10th October, 2020
Payam: Jeckow
State: Upper Nile

Introduction

The focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted on 10th October, 2020. Twelve women attended the discussions which were facilitated by Coalition for Humanity Field Staff based in Maiwut County.

General Security

Due to the conflict that had erupted between Maiwut and Jeckow, women didn't feel safe walking in the community, they said there was a high risk of revenge killing especially where brothers of theirs had killed someone from the neighbouring community. Women were also harassed by the army and other groups of men and youths who would hide in the forests to attack them when they collect firewood. They added that the situation was not better even inside the house because their husbands would beat them especially when they came drunk. The situation was generally not secure also in terms of food security due to floods that engulfed most Payams hence destroying crops.

During distribution, women and girls would fight to keep their positions in the distribution lines. Those who don't know anybody were said to end up not receiving anything especially when the items are limited. The elderly and people with special needs were frequently assisted to collect the items though some families would not accept and would want them to pick the items by themselves.

The women preferred to have a place where women would gather and have some fun and learn from each other. They also suggested for more training on their rights, empowerment and channels where their issues could be listened to and considered. Women also needed health care services so that if anything like rape happen, they would get assistance.

WASH related protection Concerns

Conflicts at water points were said to be very common especially during the dry season. The women said there were only 2 water points in Jeckow Ethiopia and everybody fetched water from there. Cases of sexual harassment and abuse were reported from Ethiopia during dry seasons though they were minimal in the rainy months because women would not cross and fetch water from Ethiopia. The Army, youths and men were the perpetrators of the sexual harassment and abuse. Sometimes the women don't take action to report because it has always been believed that they are the cause of the problems. The women however believed that empowering them with knowledge through training would help them understand and fight for their rights. They also recommended a training for the local authority to understand issues that affected women and how they would help them.

Domestic Violence

In the community, domestic violence was very common and women were the most affected. It would be as a result of limited resources, forced child marriage or even alcoholism. Community elders mostly solved the issues though when it gets serious to lead into divorce then the local authority is involved

Intimate partner Violence

Women reported that they frequently got beaten up by their husbands though some of them believed it was cultural to be beaten. Despite the violence, women persevere because they don't have anyone to report to. Some would commit suicide when it gets out of hand and others have been reported to kill the husbands. The community believed men had rights over their wives. In fact, parents would often warn their daughters never to report their husbands anywhere about conflicts inside the house.

Child marriage

The participants said forced child marriages were common and normal in their community because they also married people they had never known. An example was given that a small girl was forced to marry an old man in October 2020. It was added that women sometimes pushed their children into marriage to avoid a lot of responsibilities because through marriage they were able to get someone who would help them with the chores that is a co-wife or a daughter-in-law when a son marries. They however said they had a role to stop their sons from marrying and they shall allow them go to school and continue working at home. For girls they said it was difficult because the fathers made all the decisions about their marriages and as women, they had no authority.

Decision making at home

Women said they were not allowed to make any decisions in the family matters and men never consulted on anything. They added that it was a form of taboo to make decisions in the absence of their husbands.

Housing land and property

Women were generally not allowed to own land or take ownership of any property. In cases where a husband passes on, everything is put under the control of a brother in-law. It was added that it would always be frustrating and worse when a brother in-law inherits. The children drop out of school and getting even a meal a day becomes a problem. They also suggested the need for capacity building men leaders, local authorities, opinion leaders, chiefs and church leaders including women on the rights of women.

Role of women in leadership

According to the participants, women were not involved in any big leadership position in the community especially positions like Local authorities such as commissioner, Director of Relief organization for South Sudan (ROSS) or even Payam leader. The positions were reserved for the men. For any big position, women worked as volunteers. This meant that men took all the incentives for the position and the reasons as to why they would just choose to stay at home. They were also not allowed to participate in decision making and or give their opinion concerning certain issues such as revenge killings or marriage. Despite most women having not been educated, they believed they had good ideas that would help the community if they shared in public gatherings. However, this was not possible because they would never be allowed by their husbands to speak in any public gathering or in front of people. They recommended awareness raising in the community on the human rights and capacity building training for women and men to understand the important of involving women in leadership position.

Redress mechanisms

Women said they had nobody in the community including those in leadership that they would report to when it comes to their problems. As a result, most of them would choose to keep to themselves the problems. A few said they would attempt to inform the brother in laws their frustrations but nothing much come out of it. Women therefore took no action on issues related to violence or sexual assault. A few would get a break by visiting their parents' homes. An RI facility in Jeckow helped those who were badly injured though it has no capacity to treat victims of rape. The facility was also very far and most patients would be required to use a boat or swim to access services. The area also lacked other facilities that would offer counselling support or in-kind assistance to women.

Summary of findings

Women are not allowed to own land in the community and domestic violence was a common practice that seemed ingrained in the local culture. Practically there's no evidence of any rights that would be accorded to women in the community. Women would undergo domestic violence, intimate partner violence and sexual violence outside the home set up and there is little or no step that would be taken/holding perpetrators accountable. The women have no authority to participate and influence decision making on issues that would be affecting the society.

Conclusions and recommendations

- 1 There is need for women and girl's friendly spaces in Warweng Payam so women can go and express their issues and learn from each other's experiences
- 2 Men and youth need to be trained on the importance of respecting their wives, consulting them on family affairs and resolving family issues peacefully without quarrelling or beating their wives.
- 3 There is a need for case management and psychosocial support services in Warweng Payam to handle GBV cases.
- 4 There is a need for awareness raising sessions targeting men, opinion leaders, chiefs and local leaders on rights violations, GBV, negative cultural practices, behaviours and social norms that discriminates women and girls on land ownership.
- 5 Youth and men need to be aware and trained on negative impacts of sexual violence, domestic violence, and economic violence.
- 7 Engaging women in small income generating activities to empower them and build their capacity would be key in ensuring their independence.
- 8 Need for capacity building training on human rights for parents, local leaders, police personnel's, chiefs, paramount chiefs and customary courts.

Findings from Women November



Maiwut County protection monitoring report
Women FGD

Date: 24th November 2020
Maiwut county
State: Upper Nile

Introduction

The focus group discussion was conducted on 24th November 2020 in Maiwut County. The meeting was attended by 12 women between the ages of 20 to 40 years from the five Payams (Kizgile, Jotome, Maidiet, Thoch, Pinythor). The discussions were facilitated by Coalition for Humanity field staff based in Maiwut County.

General Security

Women said the wars that have been in this part of the country have left them with trauma and scarcity of food to the people of this particular community, more especially because farms and houses were burnt during the war leaving the people with no food. Some organizations like WFP have really tried to help solve this particular problem, but the food they provide is not enough to feed everyone in the community hence increasing the chances of violence.

Women said elderly and the vulnerable people face a tone of problems during distribution of food because they are not handled with specialty, they have to be in the same line with the physically strong people, and their only help comes from their relatives or friends who feel pity for them.

The root cause of insecurity was said to be the lack of enough food in the community, if food was to be distributed in plenty the insecurity would reduce, creation of women protection groups composed of women leaders would be a great help to the community because it would serve as a body that will stand in the way of injustices. They would be the define body to the women in the community.

WASH related protection Concerns

Women said, during the wet seasons the conflicts that arise at the water points are not in large numbers because most of the people collect water from the stream that is in within Maiwut, but during the dry seasons the women in the communities are forced to either go to the neighbouring communities to fetch water, because the boreholes that are available in the community are not enough, this leads to the eruption of fights or conflicts to the women at the water points. Women said the long distances that they move to fetch water more especially during the dry seasons, causes a very big risk to them, because it is during these movements that they face harassments like rape.

Domestic Violence

Women said, domestic violence is a very common action and practice in the community. The men in the community tend to bully them under the basis that they are just women and have no right to say about anything, so they are not allowed to object or propose anything because the men get angry and end up beating the women. Whenever there was that kind of violence, the relatives of the two parties come together to talk about the way forward and instead of condemning the wrong they tend to support the men. So, they have no one to run to when they face certain problems.

Intimate partner Violence

Women said, intimate partner violence is a very common action in that community, it is believed that they were bought with cows and if you married a woman, she was supposed to be your property. In most cases, they would keep quiet more especially because of fear for the fact that no one would actually stand up for them not even their own relatives but instead they would accuse them of being the problem or cause instead of the victim they were. Another reason is that the culture of the communities and South Sudan at large does not condemn such acts.

Child marriage

Women said Child marriages are yet another common practice in that community, that was because the people of that community believe that a girl is a source of wealth that is why they tend to marry their children off to older men who will give them very many cows. Women said hunger was another factor that led to child marriage. A quarter of the girls being married off in that community were victims of rape, those girls are forced to marry the same man who raped them before it was all discovered in order to reduce shame to the family. Women are forced to remain silent since they have no right to speak over the matters that concern their children; they are not the decision makers; of fear for instance if a woman objects to this kind of marriage she and her daughter are beaten up. Women suggested that creation of employment for them will help reduce child marriages, because the man will not have to care about the family since they would be the ones facilitating all the family expense and buy cows too that was a task, they wish to take in order to save their children.

Decision making at home

Women said they were allowed to make decision only in matters that are not related to violence which was because they were not believed to make right decisions when it came to violence. Women were not even allowed to make decisions when it came to the future of their children, be it positive or negative for they were believed to have a shallow mind and that 'they cannot think beyond the kitchen' should they try to make a decision without permission, they are beaten and accused of having made the decision under the influence of alcohol.

Housing land and property

It was very clear from the women that the housing, land and property were things that men owned and not women. They further made clarifications on this by explaining that in case of death of a husband, all the property is taken up by the brothers of the husband ---- this happened when the deceased did not have a son at the time of his death and the culture supported this act. However, according to women this act was very unfair to the affected families because a lot of problems would come along. Women said these situations always make them find other means of acquiring income to their families these are fetch firewood and or water for sell.

Women are not allowed to own properties like land and cows, even if they own land and cows, they do not even have a say on what happens to the land or cows. Women reported that, they don't feel independent to own their property, the only time they can be allowed to own property was if they have a husband who takes control of the properties. Women said they have no body to run to for support because the laws of the land only favour the men.

Role of women in leadership

It was reiterated that the community had had a belief since time immemorial that women could not lead. As a result, the local authority had only one woman in the whole group but she was a junior staff and did not have a say on any matters they discussed, they did not include her in the participation and discussion at times they even count her out.

Women said they were a symbol of the 35% that our government and other stake holders had been preaching about, but initially they had no power in the decision making and therefore, cannot help themselves as women when need be. Women said the women leaders were only allowed to make decisions on simple things that couldn't interfere with the way of life for the men and cannot make decisions like giving women right to decide when their daughters and sons should get married and to who.

Creating an awareness on human rights targeting women, men, boys, girls, leaders and local authorities would help sensitize the community to understand the importance of women involvement in the leadership positions. They also suggested for frequent women empowerment trainings on leadership skills to improve their standards in the community.

Redress mechanisms

Women said they had no one to talk to in this community when they had problems apart from close relatives who were also bound by the same community norms and culture, their relatives and parents just encourage them to persevere most of the time with no action taken. Women would also report to Payam women leaders but will still not get support due to the barriers that deny women a right to expression. This was said to be the root cause of so many domestic violence cases unresolved which had made women not to report any occurrences because nobody cared. However, women said there were organizations in the community that dealt with health and had always stepped up in case of any rape or physical assault (Relief International and ICRC) however the case was handled with a lot of privacy and were never reported especially those that involved rape due to the shame that came with it.

Summary on the findings

GBV issues are common in Maiwut County and the women have got no rights over most issues. Though they never mentioned how many cases of rape had occurred due to the fact that most of these cases were turned into marriages. This explains why most girls were married off from the ages of 13-18 years old and even younger than that, we still believe there are so many rape cases. Physical assault and intimate violence are the order of the day since it is heavily supported by culture and norms. Safety of women is also not guaranteed due to sexual assault, sexual harassment and violence on the way to fetch firewood and water. Their level of involvement in decision making is also very low only on some decisions in the house but not in the community issues. Women are not allowed to take senior positions and are not allowed to speak in public meetings.

Conclusions and recommendations


Youth and men need awareness and training on the negative impacts of sexual violence, domestic violence and economic violence.

- 1 There is need for awareness sessions targeting men, opinion leaders, chiefs and the local authority on the human rights violation and GBV as well as the impact of the negative cultural practices, behaviour and social norms that discriminate women and girls against land ownership and decision making.
- 2 Need for capacity building for leaders, parents, chiefs, paramount chiefs, police personnel and customary courts on human rights.
- 3 There is need to support women through small incomes generations activities to improve on their standards of living.
- 4 Men and youth need to be trained on the importance of respecting their wives, consulting them in family affairs and resolving family affairs peacefully.

**WOMEN RIGHTS VIOLATION, PROTECTION
ASSESSMENT, MONITORING AND ANALYSIS
REPORT, DECEMBER 2020**

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