

Report from Yambio

The people here have experienced a huge amount of insecurity in recent years. All roads out of Yambio in different directions remain insecure, sometimes for long periods. The road to the Uganda border has been closed for more than 2 years. This means some necessary supplies have to be transported from Uganda via DR Congo which adds to the cost. Roads are also very poor as is the phone network. The SS Pound:

USD rate fluctuates hugely. From 3 SS Pound: 1 USD a couple of years back, the exchange rate now fluctuates between 140 -300 SS pounds depending largely on security related factors.



Rimenze IDP settlement (Photo: CF/JRS)

There are a couple of small IDP camps that I have not been able to visit because of insecurity and the need to wait for a multi-agency convoy headed by UNMISS (UN Mission in South Sudan). JRS has a presence there, and hopes to grow it in the months ahead.

Yambio is a place where many ethnic groups live together and they comprise host community, returnees and IDPs. You can see this clearly in the mix of students attending schools being supported by JRS. This is something that makes this part of S Sudan unique and it needs to be protected. In some ways it is a model for peace and peaceful integration of different communities.

There is always a sense that while trying to build a life here people are always poised to run, in case of more insecurity. This is a difficult way to live. Having their children in local schools, being able to cultivate enough to live off, finding assurance in the stable presence of actors like JRS are important factors contributing to stability amidst much that is uncertain.

JRS is well appreciated here, and is making important contributions to schools in very practical ways and through a particular focus on affirmative action initiatives to attract and retain girls, including female teachers. JRS also has very important insights into the psycho-social needs in the community which there may be scope to build on. Soft advocacy, informal referral and information sharing is also a very important function JRS has here where insecurity, poor roads and poor phone networks can at times make community access to information limited.

Noelle Fitzpatrick
Liaison Officer South Sudan