

21 July 2011

Highlights:

- The number of returns to South Sudan since last autumn stands at more than 325,400. Emergency assistance in key sectors is underway to returnees that have recently arrived in Renk in Upper Nile.
- At the height of the lean season, close to 1 million people are receiving food assistance.
- The first consolidated appeal was launched on 20 July to fund relief efforts in the first critical few months of the new Republic of South Sudan.

I. Situation Overview

Responding to emergency needs among returnees from Sudan continued to be a major focus for humanitarian partners. An additional 2,500 southerners arrived through Upper Nile mainly to Renk where emergency assistance in key sectors to the newly arrived has been provided over the week. Food security and livelihoods cluster partners have reported that gains in food security last year are being reversed by a combination of increased insecurity, high food prices, a rise in demand resulting from the influx of returnees and decreased food availability in the market due to commercial blockade from Sudan. South Sudan is currently at the height of the hunger period that traditionally stretches from March to August, a period when thousands of households are forced to reduce their consumption before the first harvest. In addition to the nearly one million people that currently receive food assistance in South Sudan, at least an additional 400,000 people are expected to need assistance during this season according to cluster partners. Of further concern during the reporting period was an increase of interference with relief operations in Warrap State where four incidents of commandeering or attempts to commander vehicles were reported.

II. Returns to South Sudan

Returnee Overview by State*											
State:	Upper Nile	Unity	Warrap	Northern Bahr el Ghazal	Western Bahr el Ghazal	Lakes	Jonglei	Western Equatoria	Central Equatoria	Eastern Equatoria	Total
New Arrivals 13-19 July	1,858	778	0	157	86	0	0	0	0	0	2,879
Previous Arrivals (adjustments)	0	1,169	0	0	0	1,772	0	0	0	0	2,941
Previous Total	50,224	78,166	31,377	64,816	16,911	15,560	19,756	1,047	32,858	8,875	319,590
Updated Total	52,082	80,113	31,377	64,973	16,997	17,332	19,756	1,047	32,858	8,875	325,410
Type of Returnee											
Government Assisted	20,704	31,880	16,770	20,447	6,394	15,627	16,052	531	18,611	7,437	153,412
Spontaneous	16,228	48,233	5,350	43,135	10,603	1,435	3,674	467	14,247	1,438	145,851
Unspecified	15,150	0	9,257	1,391	0	270	30	49	0	0	26,147

*since 30 October 2010. Contains only verified IOM data unless otherwise noted. Figures are as of 19 July 2011.

Influx of returns through Upper Nile continue

Returnees continued to arrive in Renk in Upper Nile with an estimated 2,500 people arriving during the week. Official registration of these people and previous returnees is still ongoing and are thus not yet reflected in official tallies above. It is estimated that some 8,500 returnees have arrived in Renk since 28 June. Some government-organized transport from Kosti in Sudan also continued, including a barge carrying approximately 780 returnees that arrived in Malakal on 18 July and another with some 160 returnees that arrived in Malakal on 20 July. The cumulative figure of southerners that have returned from Sudan since last autumn now stands at over 325,400.

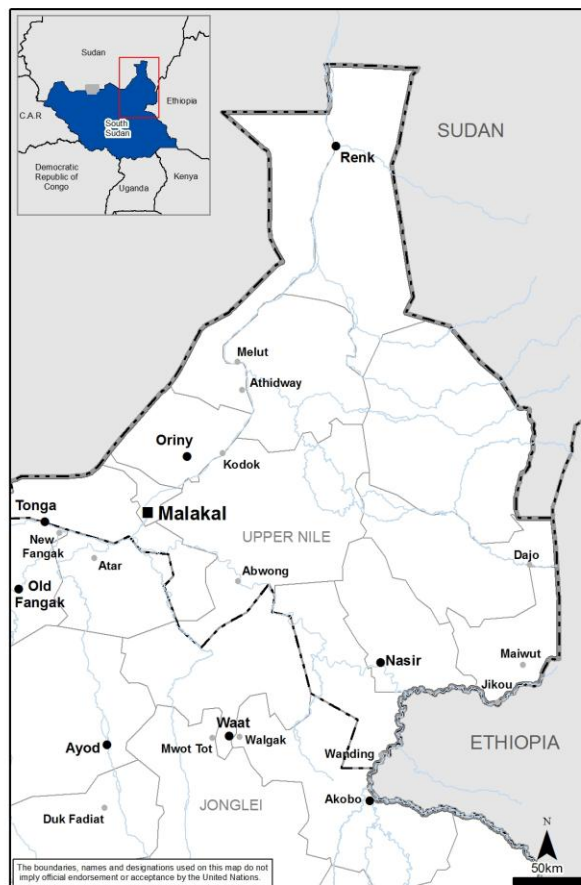
Onward transport of returnees remains challenging

The movement of returnees beyond Renk remains difficult due to the remoteness of and low transport capacity in the town as well as poor road access to locations further south during the ongoing rainy season. Humanitarian

partners are currently able to facilitate onward transport for 600 people per week from Renk to Malakal, a pace insufficient to keep up with the rate of new arrivals. Furthermore, capacity in Renk is currently not high enough to cope with a potential bottleneck situation. Humanitarian partners are advocating with the Government of South Sudan to provide barges for continued movement. Humanitarian partners are also exploring other options to facilitate the return of those southerners in Sudan that want to return home.

Response to new arrivals is underway

About 5,500 returnees who have not integrated directly into the Renk community are staying at a transit site near the river without adequate shelter or services. Humanitarian teams have identified needs for shelter, clean water, sanitation, health, food, and onward transport. In response, partners have begun providing clean water and latrines for the estimated 5,500 people at the transit site and some 1,000 non-food item kits including plastic sheeting for shelter and mosquito nets for protection against malaria have been provided. Children at the transit site have also received measles and polio vaccinations and drugs have been replenished at health facilities. Plans for food assistance, increased health support, onward transportation, and further assistance from all clusters are underway in anticipation of further needs among people returning through Renk. Logistics partners will upgrade key road transit routes from Tonga in Upper Nile to Bentiu in Unity and from Shambe to Yirol in Lakes. In Malakal, government and humanitarian partners have provided medical treatment to returnees that arrived by barge on 18 July, as many of the returnees were sick with diarrhoea and other illnesses resulting from protracted residence in poor conditions outside Khartoum and the long journey south.



Despite progress, key challenges in responding to returnees remain

Humanitarian response to the influx through northern Upper Nile faces a number of challenges. The difficulty of accessing Renk has made rapid deployment of resources and onward transport for returnees difficult. The ongoing rains further exacerbate humanitarian conditions since shelter is inadequate and health concerns such as diarrhoea and pneumonia could increase. The advance notice of barges arriving is normally short which creates difficulties for local authorities and humanitarian partners to promptly respond. Furthermore, the number of returnees, lack of medical officers, and overall poor conditions on the barges during the journey that takes from one to two weeks also worsen humanitarian needs. The humanitarian community continues to advocate with the governments of Sudan and South Sudan to resolve these issues for future transport.

III. Other humanitarian challenges: needs and response

Food security needs to be monitored closely

Food security and livelihoods cluster partners over the week reported that the drought in East Africa has not yet affected South Sudan directly. However, the potential impact on the South's already fragile food security and livelihood situation remains uncertain. Currently, close to 1 million people are receiving food assistance and at least an additional 400,000 people are expected to need assistance during this season according to cluster partners. Of further concern is that so far this year, rainfall has been erratic in several states including Lakes, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Eastern Equatoria, Warrap and some parts of Central Equatoria and Jonglei. According to cluster partners, severe crop wilting has been reported in these states and this will likely affect food production and pasture conditions if the situation with erratic rainfall continues. However, recent rainfall forecasts have indicated that there is a high probability that rains will improve, but the forecast does not indicate how the rainfall will be distributed for proper crop and pasture development. There is also a possibility of flooding and crop destruction if much of the rainfall is received towards the end of the season. The first analysis of crop performance will start in early August.

Humanitarian operating constraints reported in Warrap State

The overall humanitarian situation in both Twic County in Warrap and in the Agok area where more than 110,000 people were displaced in late May has been described as stable over the past week. However, the humanitarian operating environment has remained challenging. Existing logistical and weather challenges have been compounded by interference in relief operations by the military along key transport routes. In mid-July, OCHA received reports that Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) troops commandeered or attempted to commandeer humanitarian vehicles on at least four occasions in Twic and Gogrial West counties. Partners continue to work with authorities to stem interference and stress that relief vehicles and facilities should be used for humanitarian purposes only and respected as weapons free zones. The response operation currently underway to meet emergency needs among those displaced is also impacted by current UN security requirements that are preventing UN agencies to remaining overnight in Agok town. This has necessitated frequent movements in the area and partners are advocating for security requirements to be reviewed through fresh assessment.

According to the United Nations Interim Security Force in Abyei (UNISFA), 410 Ethiopian troops have arrived in Abyei to date. UNISFA has noted that returns of displaced people should not take place prematurely as it will take a few weeks before patrols can start.

The eastern border of Warrap also remained tense following fighting in Tonj East County in late June and early July. A rapid inter-agency assessment was conducted between 14 and 16 July to follow-up on the reports of inter- and intra- communal clashes and cattle rustling between 30 June and 9 July and displacement in the affected areas. The casualty figures could not be verified, but it has been reported that some 28 people were killed and 35 injured in an attack in early July. The team found that an estimated 186 people were affected by the conflict and that they had been displaced to a nearby village but had since returned to their villages of origin. As the people had lost at least one source of livelihood – cattle or household assets that had been looted – it was recommended that they receive food assistance for two months before they can rely on their own farm production in September/October and non-food items such as cooking utensils.

The security situation in Jonglei remains uncertain

The situation in Jonglei has continued to be tense with local authorities in Duk County reporting that Murle youth have been mobilizing to retaliate to inter-communal conflict over the last month. Protection actors in the state are discussing how to handle the issue, including through UNMISS troops deployment. Two international NGOs relocated staff this week for fear of clashes related to the current build-up. The NGOs are running health programs and although local staff remain in Duk, admissions are reported to be low as many women and children reportedly have left the area due to the tensions. On 21 July, a humanitarian assessment mission travelled to Gumruk and Pibor town in Jonglei to assess the situation of displaced people following inter-communal clashes between the Lou Nuer and Murle in late June and early July. In the inter-communal conflict, it has been reported that an unconfirmed number of people have been displaced from their homes in Lekuangole and Gumruk payams to Pibor town. Local authorities further reported hundreds were killed, women and children abducted and large numbers of cattle raided. During the assessment, the team comprising government, UN and NGO partners spoke with local authorities and conducted interviews with displaced people. Most of the displaced the team saw were women and children. Numbers of displaced and humanitarian needs are still being consolidated.

IV. Humanitarian planning and coordination

Consolidated appeal launched to fund relief efforts in South Sudan

The first Consolidated Appeal (CAP) for South Sudan was launched in Geneva on 20 July at the Global CAP launch by the Emergency Relief Coordinator. The appeal for South Sudan is comprised of 256 projects totalling US\$621 million. The appeal includes revisions to the original 2011 projects contained in the Sudan Humanitarian Work Plan as well as new projects which are introduced in order to address the precarious situation in South Sudan. To date, 34 per cent of funding requirements have been received. The strategy outlined in the document concentrates on the emergency services that will be necessary during the next six months and how they can be delivered in the most efficient manner. The appeal will be presented in Juba shortly at an upcoming Humanitarian Coordination Forum.

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