



Highlights

- Returns from northern to southern Sudan have further slowed down whilst passage for returnees through Southern Kordofan remains difficult.
- Aid agencies regain access into Zamzam camp in Darfur after a three day suspension.
- UNHAS flights to many locations in Darfur remain suspended.
- Food prices are rising further in South Sudan and Abyei.

1. Situation overview

The pace of North-South returns has remained at lower levels during the last week due to continued uncertainty about the situation in Southern Kordofan. The previously stranded returnees have arrived in Northern Bahr El Ghazal State, travelling via Unity State to avoid potential problems along the difficult Nyama route. According to the Southern Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (SSRRC), organised returns are still on hold until the situation in Abyei and Southern Kordofan State is stabilised. No new reports of incidents targeting returnees have been reported during the past week. Emergency response is ongoing in the main returnee areas throughout the south.

International NGOs were allowed into Zamzam camp in Darfur on 27 January. They had been unable to access and continue their activities in the camp between 23-26 January following an operation there by the Government of Sudan (GoS) security forces on 23 January.

Efforts continue to ensure the release of three UNHAS crew who were kidnapped on 13 January in Um Shalaya area of Darfur. The Federal Minister for Humanitarian Affairs Mr Joseph Lual Achuil stated at the 26 January High Level Committee (HLC) meeting in Khartoum that the Government is making every effort to secure their immediate and safe release. According to the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS), several persons were arrested in relation to the incident.

2. North-South population movements

The pace of returns continued at reduced rates during the past week, having slowed down significantly compared to the peaks in the latter part of December and early January. Although arrangements have been made to improve security for returnees travelling through Southern Kordofan, uncertainty remains. On 22 January movement through Nyama resumed with a convoy of 450 individuals being escorted by Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and Misseriya community representatives. The convoy arrived safely at Balom in Abyei area where escorts were taken over by Joint Integrated Units (JIUs).

Some movements by barge along the Nile, on the other hand, continued during this hiatus. As of 25 January, there were 3,560 people in the transit centre in Kosti, awaiting southbound river transport, according to ADRA-IOM/Kosti and UNMIS.

On 27 January, the Humanitarian Country Team endorsed the decision to create a Returns Sector in northern Sudan to strengthen coordination and support to the ongoing North-South population movements.

Returnees overview (Statistical update for 26 January 2010)

According to information from IOM, ADRA, SSRRC and RCSO, the number of southerners that have moved from northern Sudan to southern Sudan, Southern Kordofan and the Abyei area since October 2010 is the following:

Southern Sudan	Southern Kordofan	Abyei Area
191,616	5,210	26,270

Emergency response in the main returnee areas

All clusters continue to engage in emergency response in affected areas, including follow-up on protection needs of returnees involved in the incidents in Southern Kordofan earlier this month. In terms of health response, the Ministry of Health (MoH) in Unity State and partners have embarked on a measles vaccination campaign in Unity's Rubkona and Mayom counties, where some cases of suspected measles have been reported. The state MoH has distributed drugs to all health facilities for a period of four months. A measles vaccination campaign has also been undertaken in Twic County in Warrap. The non-food items and emergency shelter cluster has scaled up response in Warrap to meet continued needs and is also undertaking an assessment in Twic County. Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) partners continue to respond to basic needs in hot spot areas such as Aweil in Northern Bahr el Ghazal and Malakal in Upper Nile. In Unity, WASH partners are ready to provide increased response in the event of potential diversion of convoys through the state due to the situation in Southern Kordofan.

On 27 January, aid agencies will work out an action plan on potential assistance to a caseload of northerners who returned from the south, namely 2,225 persons in Al Hudieb and 1,890 persons in Dubkarya (near Kosti) in White Nile State. The components of the action plan to be discussed include NFI packages, shelter (either roofing material or tents), mobile clinic once or twice a month, access to safe water through erecting a water treatment unit, construction of latrines, supplementary food for under-five children and child-friendly spaces. It was reported that since December, the community in Dubkarya received very little support from UN agencies and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in White Nile State.

3. Southern Sudan

In the first weeks of January, more than 50 people were reported killed in incidents of cattle raiding, tribal violence or clashes between armed groups. Approximately 500 people were displaced in Lakes State earlier in January. Inter-tribal violence and resultant humanitarian impacts remain low compared to the high rate of death and displacement seen in 2009 and early 2010.

Grain stocks are declining in some border areas, leading to increased prices, which are also under pressure from returnee arrivals. WFP has reported that Malakal, Bentiu, Rumbek and Juba are currently facing the highest food prices in southern Sudan. The rise stems from several factors, including dramatic increases of prices in the North, levies charged at check points along the North-South supply routes and the departure of a number of Northern traders, most of whom are expected to return to the South once their position in a future independent South Sudan has been clarified. WFP is closely following the trends in the traders' behavior as well as carrying out weekly price market monitoring.

Health authorities and WHO in southern Sudan have taken preventive and preparedness measures following reports of a Yellow Fever outbreak in neighbouring Uganda. No cases have been reported in southern Sudan. Considering the high cross-border movements, additional vaccines have been procured. Fact sheets have been distributed in areas within southern Sudan bordering Uganda and health workers have received relevant training on the issue.

Slow land allocation

Challenges relating to lack of onward transport and slow land allocation persist and inhibit the transition to reintegration in many locations. The slow pace of land allocation in Kwajok in Warrap, Aweil in Northern Bahr el Ghazal and to a lesser degree Malakal in Upper Nile, as well as in Lakes State, continues to create bottlenecks that exacerbate humanitarian needs. Some returnees have now been in transit locations for two months, necessitating continued humanitarian assistance. Following a visit by the Humanitarian Coordinator and donors, UNDP has deployed urban planners to Kwajok to help alleviate this problem, and state governments in both Warrap and Northern Bahr el Ghazal are prioritising the movement of returnees to final destination sites. In Northern Bahr el Ghazal the state government plan is for each county headquarters to provide 1,000 plots of land to accommodate returnees. IOM has been supporting onward transportation in Jonglei, Lakes, Upper Nile, Warrap, and Greater Equatoria.

State reintegration assessments

The return, reinsertion and early reintegration assessment exercise is underway for prioritised counties/payams who have received 500 or more returnees from northern Sudan since October 2010. Approximately a quarter of all payams in the south are expected to be assessed. The aim of the exercise is to collect demographic and baseline information on existing services/facilities across sectors in order to develop state wide reintegration plans.

4. Abyei area

UNMIS reported on 26 January that a caseload of an estimated 4,154 returnees who reportedly travelled from Khartoum to Abyei on 19-22 January still needs to be verified. Abyei Administration has announced a movement from Khartoum of an additional 4,500 returnees in the near future, according to UNMIS.

Since the start of the state organised returns to Abyei on 22 November 2010, 26,270 organised returnees have been registered, according to RCSO.

WFP's distribution of three months food rations continue as part of the returnee reintegration support. Food security and livelihood programmes will focus on returnees in the rural areas. Furthermore, there is acute shortage of food in Abyei market due to the road closures, affecting the most vulnerable households within the host community. WFP plans to conduct a food security monitoring in both the returnee and host communities.

With many of the returnees arriving with hardly any possessions and few options other than to camp in open areas in Abyei town and rural villages, UNHCR is distributing emergency relief items in partnership with Save the Children-Sweden. UNHCR emergency kits (comprising of a kitchen set, bucket, jerry-cans, fleece blankets, a plastic sheet, mosquito nets, sleeping mats; and soap) will provide interim shelter and immediate start-up assistance to help returnees permanently re-establish themselves. There have been delays incurred due to breaks in the supply chain from the blockade of roads south of Nyama.

Ten measles cases were reported in Agok and Abyei (two suspected and eight confirmed) with most cases associated with returnees. During an emergency health sector meeting, humanitarian partners agreed to conduct a measles campaign in Agok and Abyei particularly in returnee villages, index villages and the surroundings. MSF has already started measles immunisation in Agok and surrounding villages targeting 6,315 children under the age of five. Immunisation in Abyei and surrounding areas supported by UNICEF, GOAL and WHO/MoH will target about 5,400 children under 5 years and start as soon as possible.

5. Darfur

Security situation and administrative impediments

The security situation in West Darfur remains unpredictable, given recent kidnappings and fighting in the parts of the state. Following the abduction of three UNHAS helicopter crew, WFP-UNHAS has temporarily limited flights to 38 locations out of 59 served in Darfur. Those 38 locations are sites where UNAMID is not present on the ground.

WFP is working with the Government and UNAMID to secure adequate protection at the remaining sites, and once established, flights will resume.

On 25 January, UNAMID confirmed reports of intense fighting between SAF and the Sudan Liberation Army/Minni Minnawi (SLA/MM) in Tabit, located approximately 45km south of El Fasher, North Darfur. Clashes began on 24 January. There are no reports yet of casualties or population displaced.

A planned OCHA mission to Kebkabiya on 26 January to monitor the humanitarian situation on the ground was cancelled due to clashes in the Tabit area.

On 24 January, OCHA led a four day inter-agency follow-up mission to Shearia for a needs assessment following the fighting in December 2011 between GoS forces and SLA/MM. The team (OCHA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNJLC, UNFPA, UNAMID and WVI) took with them relief supplies for WASH, NFIs, health and hygiene kits for the IDPs. HAC has asked OCHA to put transportation of nutritional items to Shearia and Khor Abache on hold until technical partners who can implement the nutrition programme are identified on the ground.

On 20 January CRS, the largest INGO in West Darfur, was advised by the NISS to stop all their operations across West Darfur and close their offices for security reasons. All CRS staff left West Darfur on 22 January. The UN Humanitarian Coordinator immediately activated consultation mechanism with authorities, including State Governor and the State Minister of Humanitarian Affairs. The decision was reversed and CRS staff are expected to return within a week.

On 23 January, the Darfur coordinator of FAR, was ordered by the NISS to relinquish his post and hand over to his deputy. The decision was later reversed by the NISS after intervention from the Humanitarian Coordinator.

Access to Zamzam camp

On 23 January, over 50 GoS military vehicles cordoned off the Zamzam IDP camp and until 3pm did not allow any UNAMID patrol to enter the camp. According to reports by UNAMID CivPOL, SAF and police units conducted house-to-house search in the camp to search for arms. According to a UNAMID press release, the Government reported to UNAMID that the operation resulted in the arrest of 37 individuals, for reasons unknown, the impounding of 10 4x4 vehicles, the seizure of three assault rifle magazines, unspecified quantities of ammunitions, and suspected stolen goods and illegal substances.

On the afternoon of 23 January OCHA, UNHCR and UNAMID staff were allowed into the camp, and agencies were also allowed into Zamzam on 24 January for the camp coordination meeting. International NGOs providing services in the camp were allowed back on 27 January. Health clinics, schools, and nutrition centres in Zamzam were closed 24 – 26 January.

Inter-agency missions to Shangil Tobay, Kebkabiya, Shearia, Khor Abache

An inter-agency mission to Shangil Tobay led by OCHA between 16-20 January was conducted in partnership with UNICEF, Plan Sudan, Save the Children Sweden and State Council for Child Welfare. The figure for the new arrivals outside the UNAMID team site now stands at 2,149 households. It is also reported that there are still people enroute to the camp, bringing their belongings and livestock with them. According to community leaders, the total number of people displaced to the four camps are 6,199 households. OCHA has recommended that IOM start verification of the new arrivals in order to consolidate the numbers. OCHA will advocate for extra funding to cover the four camps with health and sanitation activities (Oxfam America, UNICEF). As seven out of the 10 schools in the area are not currently open, the education cluster is encouraged fill the gap in education and pre-education activities.

While IDP camps such as Zamzam and El Salaam have registered some new arrivals as a result of this conflict (approximately 1000 and 100 individuals respectively), the bulk of displacement is expected to be temporary. IDPs have expressed interest to return to their homes following UXO clearance and sufficient guarantees of their safety and security.

High Level Committee meeting in Khartoum

The HLC met on 26 January at the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, co-chaired by the Federal Minister, and the Humanitarian Coordinator. Participants included Government officials and the international community, including senior representatives of non-governmental organisations, United Nations humanitarian agencies and UNAMID, European Commission, the League of Arab States, Russia, the Netherlands, Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States of America.

At the HLC meeting, HAC Commissioner General Mr. Suliman Abdelrahman Suliman informed that the New Darfur Strategy for 2011 to 2016, approved by the Government in November 2010, targets the return, resettlement and reintegration of 270,000 persons in 2011.

Serious concern was expressed at the meeting about the impact that the recent series of security incidents are having on humanitarian and recovery programmes, in particular on the ability to assess needs and deliver assistance in a principled and accountable manner and effectively serve the population of Darfur.

Members agreed that the next HLC meeting should take place on 23 February.