



Key Points

- Fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Sudan People's Liberation Movement - North (SPLM-N) forces continues to affect civilians in Blue Nile and South Kordofan states.
- Some 2,000 more Sudanese civilians fled from Blue Nile State into Ethiopia, bringing the total number of Sudanese refugees in Ethiopia to 28,700 people.
- Fighting is expected to have a major impact on food security for IDPs and other people affected by the fighting in Blue Nile and South Kordofan states.
- Tribal violence near Muglad in South Kordofan State left 172 dead and raised concern over the safety of trains transporting South Sudanese from Khartoum to South Sudan.
- Returns from Sudan to South Sudan continue with more than 19,000 returnees in Kosti way station awaiting assistance to travel to South Sudan.
- A total of 17,600 refugee and IDP returns have been verified in Jebel Moon, West Darfur.

1. Blue Nile State

Fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPM-N) forces continues in Blue Nile State, with severe consequences for the civilian population. Fighting was reported north of Kurmuk town, near Al Birka (about 10 km northwest of Kurmuk town) and Sally (27 km north of Kurmuk). UNHCR reports that air attacks have continued sporadically in Kurmuk locality.

Between 19 and 24 October, the Sudanese Red Crescent Society (SRCS) conducted a verification mission to five IDP locations in Bau and Kurmuk localities and identified an estimated 10,300 displaced people living in schools, with host families or out in the open. SRCS reported last week that an estimated 60,000 people are currently displaced in Blue Nile.

UNHCR reports that the continued fighting and air attacks this week in Blue Nile have caused almost 2,000 Sudanese civilians to flee across the border into Ethiopia. UNHCR estimates that 28,700 Sudanese refugees have fled the State into Ethiopia since fighting began in early September.

Security at the five known border entry points through which Sudanese refugees flee into Ethiopia has increased due to fighting between SAF and SPLM-N, according to UNHCR. While the borders remain open to Sudanese refugees crossing into Ethiopia, the Ethiopian Federal Police are now prohibiting the movement of persons back into Sudan, according to UNHCR.

There are concerns that fighting is likely to intensify with the start of the dry season in November, potentially affecting more civilians in Blue Nile. According to UNHCR, more refugees are expected to arrive in Ethiopia from Blue Nile.

The Resident Coordinator's Support Office (RCSO) reports that the security situation in the towns of Ed Damazine and Roseires remains calm. No international staff have been permitted to return. However, there are currently about 20 UN and 48 INGO national staff in Ed Damazine who were able to return to the State to resume their work. The Government continues to request that all international humanitarian assistance be channelled through the SRCS, other national organisations or line ministries. During the reporting period, the movement of UN and INGOs outside Ed Damazine remained restricted, with the exception of national staff from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) who were allowed to travel in joint missions with SRCS.

Over the past week, malaria has been the most prevalent illness reported in health facilities in Blue Nile, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). WHO reported that children under five years accounted for 26 per cent of cases, while children above five years old accounted for 30 percent of the total number of cases. This

indicates that malaria control measures need a comprehensive review, particularly with regard to community awareness on proper use of mosquito bed nets and applying control measures at household level. During the reporting period, an increase in the number of cases of bloody diarrhoea and suspected typhoid fever was observed, indicating a need to boost environmental health interventions in the State.

2. South Kordofan State

It was reported last week that in a separate incident outside of the area of fighting between SAF and SPLM-N, conflict between two Misseriya sub-clans in the Balila area, 100 km northeast of Muglad, resulted in over 150 people killed. According to an update from UNHCR this week, the number of casualties reached 172 killed and 25 injured. The conflict appears to be related to an outstanding land issue and both parties agreed to dispatch Misseriya leaders to both sub-clans to ease tension and resolve the issue. This conflict raised concerns over the safety of the returnee trains from Khartoum bound for South Sudan. A military escort will be accompanying the trains from Babanosa up to the border with South Sudan.

Meanwhile, people displaced by fighting between SAF and SPLM-N in South Kordofan State continue to arrive in the State capital Kadugli. According to reports received by UNHCR, some 205 people arrived in Kadugli this week. The Government of Sudan's Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) is verifying these numbers.

New IDP arrivals have also been reported in Dilling town (about 115 km north of Kadugli) after the fighting that took place in Alfaragil village earlier this month. HAC estimates that 167 displaced people arrived in Dilling. IDPs have been sheltered by host families in Dilling and food assistance has been provided through HAC/humanitarian committee and NGOs.

The roads leading to Julud, Talodi and Kauda from Kadugli are reportedly mined and no commercial and private traffic are moving, according to information received by partners from the security forces.

National staff of UN agencies and international NGOs are being permitted to work in many locations in South Kordofan, in cooperation with HAC and local partners. According to latest figures provided to OCHA, there are currently some 250 national humanitarian workers on the ground in South Kordofan. No international UN staff are currently present in the State.

The USAID-funded Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSNET) reported this week that as fighting in South Kordofan began during the peak of the planting season, by mid August only 40 percent of the total area in the State was planted due to insecurity and late rains (in some areas, such as Delami locality, less than 30 percent of the area was planted). In normal years, South Kordofan contributes up to 13 per cent of the country's sorghum production and 5.4 per cent of millet production. The continued fighting is expected to significantly affect food security.

UNICEF supported the authorities and the SRCS in South Kordofan to register and follow up on 1,719 schoolchildren who have been displaced due to the armed conflict. UNICEF managed in close coordination with the State Ministry of Education (SMoE) to enrol 732 of them back into schools, while discussions with the SMoE are underway to facilitate the return of the remaining 987 children to school.

In addition, SRCS with UNICEF support is providing access to recreational support activities and mine risk education (MRE) awareness to 2,057 children and their families in Kadugli, Dilling, Al Goz, Rashad and Abugebiha through operating 11 child friendly spaces (CFS).

3. Abyei

This week UNHCR and UNICEF, together with the international NGO Intersos, undertook a mission to Abyei town, to assess conditions on the ground and the condition of the Common UN Humanitarian Compound. The team reported that the Abyei town is largely uninhabited, as is the area between Agok and Abyei town. Most

structures in town, including schools, public buildings, clinics, market stalls, private housing and UN/INGO facilities outside of the former UNMIS compound, have been largely destroyed. According to the inter-agency mission, many displaced persons fear that mines or Unexploded Ordnances (UXOs) may remain inside what is left of various structures (public and private) in town. Limited commercial activity was observed. There is no active mobile telephone network and many of the electrical transmission wires appear to have been cut.

Meanwhile, it was reported that by 26 October, over 19,000 persons in Agok, 45 km south of Abyei town, had received 185 metric tons of food provided by the Government of South Sudan, enough to feed the population for 15 days. Shortages of space and learning materials have reportedly been the main constraint affecting education needs in Agok. In response, education partners have provided 10 tents, four temporary classrooms and have mobilized education materials from Wau, to support schools which have become overpopulated because of the influx of the displaced population. The materials are to be distributed within the next week. All 14 schools in Agok and the surrounding areas which were temporarily closed during the fighting have now reopened. In addition, funding has been released for the construction of 10 additional temporary learning spaces using local materials. Education partners also conducted seven-day capacity building training for 77 school teachers, which will benefit the displaced as well as the general population. Hygiene promotion was conducted as part of the training. Demining partners have trained over 30 teachers in the Agok area on mine risk awareness. The teachers will disseminate the information to the schoolchildren in their respective schools.

Health partners provided three primary health care drug kits to the Abyei health department in Agok during the week. Each kit is designed to cater for around 10,000 people for three months for normal rate of diseases.

The UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) Demining Team has completed demining operations in the area around the Banton Bridge. Located on the key route between Abyei town and Agok, the bridge is important both for UNISFA operations to ensure security in the Abyei area and the return of some 110,000 people displaced from Abyei who are currently either in South Sudan or Agok. The UNISFA Demining Team has now started demining activities in Todach village (about 15 km north of Abyei town), which will host one of UNISFA's Company Operating Bases (COB). Fifty-six (UXOs) were identified and cleared in Todach. Engineering works are also ongoing in Baloon where another COB is planned.

The Danish Demining Group conducted a series of Mine Risk Education (MRE) training exercises in Agok area and surroundings benefiting 1,839 people, mainly IDPs. The UN Mine Action Service is not yet on the ground in Abyei due to challenges relating to entry visas for its staff. In the absence of UNMAS on the ground, no mine maps have been finalised.

4. Citizenship issues and related movements of people between Sudan & South Sudan

Movement of people of South Sudanese origin from Sudan to various destinations in South Sudan continued over the past week. Since late October 2010 about 347,300 people returned to South Sudan. However, according to various estimates between 700,000 and 1 million people of South Sudanese origin remain in Sudan. Following the secession of South Sudan on 9 July 2011, the Government of Sudan announced a nine-month transitional period for people of South Sudanese origin to either regularise their status in Sudan or move to South Sudan.

UNHCR reports that the government-organised train bound for Wau left Khartoum on 25 October with 205 people on board. The train reached Babanosa, where it is waiting for a second train from Khartoum. The train received food, water and medical assistance upon arrival in Kosti and Babanosa. Loading and manifesting of the train bound for Aweil in South Sudan was completed and the train left Khartoum on 28 October. A medical team was deployed, including midwives. Passengers were also provided with food and water.

IOM reported that each of the trains bound to Wau and Aweil is composed of 20 luggage wagons and 10 passenger carriages. IOM on 25 October agreed to provide an extra four luggage wagons (two for each train) as there is luggage remaining from previous Government-organised train movements that needs to be moved before the passengers will agree to travel. Therefore, a total of 40 luggage wagons and 20 passenger wagons will leave at the same time. So far, 35 luggage wagons have been loaded. IOM is planning to move between 2,800 and

3,000 persons with these two trains. Manifests will be shared with colleagues in Juba, South Sudan - to help prepare for reception - as soon as they are finalised.

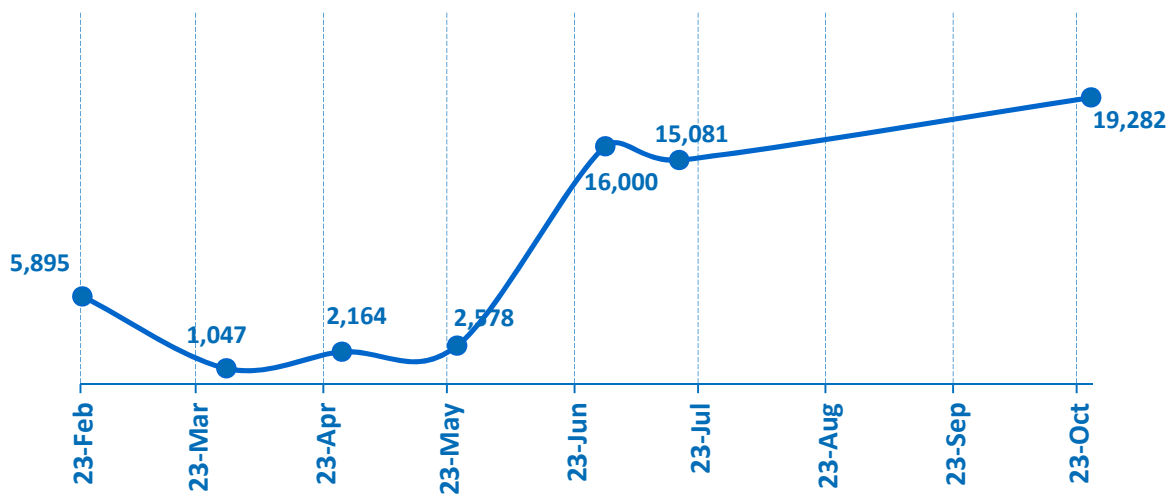
Another train organised and paid for by the Government of South Sudan was ready to leave the Soba station in Khartoum on 25 October. The three trains will meet up in Babanusa from where they will travel together with one military escort up to the border with South Sudan. Partners in South Kordofan are monitoring the situation closely to advise on the security situation following clashes between two Misseriya sub-clans last week.

The high cost of moving people and their luggage by train is not sustainable in the long run and the Returns Sector is currently working on identifying less costly options, such as a voucher system, given that there might be large groups of people willing to return to South Sudan. Ultimately, road transportation of individuals to South Sudan needs to resume. Security guarantees as well as appropriate transit assistance therefore need to be in place and border crossings be reopened if 700,000 people of South Sudanese origin are to move to South Sudan.

Kosti

Registration of new arrivals in Kosti way station, a key transit hub for people returning to South Sudan from various states of Sudan, is ongoing. By 26 October, the number of registered returnees was 19,282 people. This figure came after a comprehensive registration exercise conducted at the way-station in August and September.

Number of returnees at the Kosti way-station (23 February – 26 October 2011)



Sources: IOM, UNHCR, FAR and ADRA

Amongst newly arrived people, there were 525 registered people from Blue Nile State. UNHCR reported that this group will be given priority in terms of non-food items (NFI) and food assistance.

Meanwhile, an agreement was reached between the Government of South Sudan and a barge company currently contracted by IOM to provide an additional eight barges to accommodate the extra luggage of 6,000 people who are supposed to travel to Juba under the IOM-organised and the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) funded movement. Loading commenced on 23 October and IOM indicates that it takes approximately two days to load one luggage barge. At the current rate, an additional 12 days are required to complete the loading of eight passenger barges and 28 luggage barges before the 6,000 people and their luggage can start their journey. Factoring in Eid holidays during which the barge company and government partners will take a break, and the time taken to load passengers, it is anticipated that the convoy will leave Kosti in approximately three weeks' time.

People of South Sudanese origin in eastern states

Community leaders of people of South Sudanese origin in Kassala town, capital of Kassala state, informed UNHCR that access to education had become difficult for the community, especially at the secondary school

level. Lack of identity documentation, title deeds for property and jobs were also identified as the main concerns highlighted by the community leaders.

In another eastern State of Gedaref, community leaders of South Sudanese reported to UNHCR that they are advising their community to wait till April 2012 when the transitional period ends to get more clarity on their status.

In Port Sudan, UNHCR was told by community leaders of people of South Sudanese origin that there are about 3,000 former government employees who have been dismissed from their jobs and are waiting for their benefits. It appears that the general attitude amongst the community is to wait and see, but people are careful in avoiding any action that could attract too much attention.

5. Darfur

A senior delegation from the Government of Qatar, along with the new chairperson of the Darfur Regional Authority, arrived in El Fasher on 24 October. Nearly two years of peace talks on Darfur culminated in Doha in July with the signing of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD) by the Government of Sudan and the Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM), one of the armed movements who have been engaged in the Darfur conflict. The new chairperson announced that his first priority in implementing the Doha agreement will be the reconciliation IDPs and refugees returns, in addition to the issues of development, reconstruction and rehabilitation in Darfur.

UNHCR conducted a verification exercise in 30 villages where people had returned in Jebel Moon area in West Darfur in September-October. The majority of the verified returnees came from the border areas with Chad and some came from refugee camps inside Chad. Most returnees returned to their villages of origin, while some established seven new settlements. The verification exercise revealed that there are 17,614 returnees in Jebel Moon. UNHCR has reported that as of August 2011, 45,000 IDP returns were reported in West Darfur as well as 13,300 verified refugee returns. These 13,300 people used to stay in the border areas in a refugee-like situation.

Following reports of an estimated 500 people displaced from Ozban and Karoya villages in North Darfur to El Neem IDP camp in Ed Daein in early October, humanitarian partners in Ed Daein have conducted an assessment in the camp. It transpires that all newly arrived IDPs belong to the Zaghawa tribe who fled their houses because of an attack by people wearing military fatigues whose identity could not be determined. The priority needs of the people include food, NFIs, shelter, and education. Although the IDPs have access to some services available in the camp, including water and health facilities, their food and NFIs/shelter needs are yet to be met because of local authorities' policy not to allow new IDPs in the camp. Discussions with HAC are ongoing.

FEWSNET reports that food security concerns remain in Darfur despite relatively good rainfall in most parts of Darfur during August through September, a decline in reported violent incidents during the second half of the year, and the reported access to small plots of farmland by a considerable number of IDPs. These concerns include the poor harvests projected in localised parts of North, West and South Darfur, the sharp increase of food prices, and the recent alliance between the SPLM N and main factions of Darfur armed movements. These factors are expected to hinder the voluntary return of IDPs and constrain trade flows between central Sudan (the main source of non-cereal food supply) and Darfur.

Food aid and market purchases are the main food sources for the majority of IDPs during September/October, while own production is expected to become a more important source during the harvest and post harvest period. Casual labour is the main source of income for the majority of poor resident households and IDPs in Darfur. In most of North Darfur and some parts of South and West Darfur states, the lean season is anticipated to start in March 2012 due to expected high food prices, high inflation rates, the likelihood of a poor harvest due to rainfall shortages in October (following good rainfall in August/September), and an outbreak of localised pests such as grasshoppers, birds, millet head worms and beetles, FEWSNET reported.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) reported that during the rainy season, FAO in collaboration with line ministries, international and national NGOs supported 73,310 families with seeds and agricultural tools, out of a target of 75,831 households.