



Key Points

- Fighting between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) continued in South Kordofan with heavy clashes reported in the disputed border area of Jaw/White Lake.
- UNHCR reports that some 50,000 refugees have arrived in South Sudan from South Kordofan and Blue Nile since the beginning of the crises. This includes some 20,000 from South Kordofan and some 30,000 from Blue Nile. In addition, UNHCR reports that 33,000 Sudanese refugees from Blue Nile State have arrived in Ethiopia.
- Over 12,600 returnees are now at the Kosti way-station, waiting to return to South Sudan.
- Increasing numbers of people displaced from the Abyei area are returning to, or visiting, villages north of the Bahr al Arab/Kiir River.
- HAC reports that some 3,900 people (780 families) have returned to Toma and El Manara, North Darfur, from South Darfur.

1. South Kordofan State

Fighting between the SAF and the SPLM-N continues in South Kordofan State, particularly, along border areas between Sudan and South Sudan. On 3 December, heavy clashes were reported in the disputed border area Jaw/White Lake, about 90 km south of Kadugli, capital of South Kordofan, apparently resulting in casualties on both sides. According to UNHCR, these clashes did not reach the Yida refugee camp, located several kilometres away in South Sudan, but fear of possible attacks caused some refugees to flee south of the camp. Due to safety concerns, international NGOs have reportedly been relocated from Yida. UNHCR is increasing its efforts to relocate Sudanese refugees in Yida away from the border to safer sites in South Sudan. UNHCR estimates that altogether some 20,000 refugees from South Kordofan have arrived in South Sudan.

On 8 December, three police cars on the road from Kadugli to Dilling were attacked by SPLM-N, resulting in eight police officers killed and eight injured, according to information provided by the authorities to the UN. According to media reports, heavy fighting between SAF and SPLM-N occurred on 10 December in Warni, east of Talodi, where at least 19 SAF soldiers were reportedly killed. No reports of civilian casualties or displacement caused by this fighting have been received.

According to the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC), some 200 returnees have arrived in Trogi, some 70km south of Kadugli, and 7,000 are expected soon. The authorities have distributed one-week food rations to the returnees. It is reported that 70 percent of the houses in the town are in good condition. However, the primary health care unit (PHCU) has no drugs or medical staff and only two of the four hand pumps are working.

While restrictions on the movement of international humanitarian organisations are still in place, a joint UN mission to locations in Government-controlled areas (including El Salam, Babanusa, Muglad, Debab, and Mugadama in western part of South Kordofan) was conducted from 7 - 11 December. During the mission, meetings were held with government authorities and community leaders.

UNICEF supported the Water and Environmental Sanitation Department (WES) and the State Ministry of Education (SMoE) with the construction of school latrines in Kadugli, Dilling and El Goz localities. UNICEF also supported the Sudanese Red Crescent Society (SRCS) in organising mine risk education (MRE) awareness sessions in child-friendly spaces, reaching some 1,950 children. The Ministry of Youth and Sports also reported that it organized recreational activities for children affected by the conflict in South Kordofan reaching some 2,650 children this week.

The UN and other international humanitarian organizations have still not been granted permission by the Government to travel to any of the SPLM-N-controlled areas in South Kordofan to assess the situation and respond to humanitarian needs. The Humanitarian Country Team remains extremely concerned about reports of deteriorating conditions for civilians in these areas.

2. Blue Nile State

Fighting between the SAF and the SPLM-N has continued in the southern parts of Blue Nile State, resulting in more civilian displacement. UNHCR reports that nearly 33,000 Sudanese refugees from Blue Nile State have arrived in Ethiopia since June this year. This includes more than 18,000 refugees being hosted in two refugee camps and a transit centre, and an estimated 14,000 people living among the host community in the border areas. Together with the local authorities, UNHCR is expanding existing refugee camps in order to relocate refugees living with local families.

Meanwhile people are continuing to flee from Blue Nile State to South Sudan. According to latest reports they are currently arriving in Upper Nile State at a rate of 650 per day. Some 10,000 refugees are estimated to be in Elfoj in Maban county, in Upper Nile State. Thousands more are believed to be stranded in remote locations along the border. UNHCR and its partners are working on a new settlement in Maban County to accommodate these people, in addition to the Doro site that already hosts 20,000 refugees from Blue Nile State. The total number of Sudanese refugees in Upper Nile State, South Sudan, is estimated to be at least 30,000 people.

In Blue Nile State, landmines remain a serious concern for civilians. According to the UN, on 4 December an anti-tank land mine exploded under a truck injuring seven people at Fadmiya (70km south of Ed Damazine).

3. Abyei

The security situation in the Abyei area remains calm. UNISFA is monitoring the return of displaced Dinka Ngok from Agok and South Sudan to areas north of Bahr el Arab/River Kiir, while at the same time continuing to monitor the Misseriya southward migration from areas north of the river. While the situation remains calm at the moment, there are still concerns that tensions between these communities may escalate into possible conflict.

In response to the needs of people displaced from Abyei and the host community in Agok, UNICEF and Save the Children-Sweden (SC-S) are finalising the construction of temporary classrooms for 900 schoolchildren. Some 200 separated/street children from Abyei have been registered by UNICEF in Agok. UNICEF also supplied Intersos with 75 hygiene kits to be distributed amongst schoolgirls in Agok and supported WES Abyei in providing household water treatment for some 3,300 households in 30 villages.

According to UNISFA, pastoralists have been observed moving with their cattle in the areas of Farouk, Askar, Mekenis, Diffra, Balom, Noong, Um Khariet, Todach, Goli and Dokura. No clashes have been reported between nomadic pastoralists and agriculturalist farmers.

There is an increase in the number of displaced people returning to or visiting villages north of the Bahr al Arab/Kiir river, according to UNISFA. MSF Switzerland (MSF-CH) conducted an assessment mission to the return villages of Mijak, Mabok and Rumameer. Mabok and Rumameer will be included in the planned three-month supplementary distribution. Health needs will be covered through a weekly mobile clinic. MSF will also support the Ministry of Health's (MoH) primary health care unit (PHCU) in Rumameer with expanded immunisation activities and medical supplies. Meanwhile, SC-S, UNICEF and the Abyei education office will be sending education materials, including exercise books, school bags, blackboards to primary schools in Rumameer and Mabok.

UN Mine Action demining teams continue to work in the Abyei area. Simultaneously, the Danish Demining Group (DDG) undertook MRE activities for 1,300 displaced people in Abyei last week, including children in Agok schools. DDG also conducted landmine and unexploded ordnance (UXO) awareness sessions to community members.

4. Sudan – South Sudan population movements

As of 4 December, there were over 12,600 people at the Kosti way-station waiting to return to South Sudan, with an average of 85 to 100 people arriving at the way-station daily, according to IOM.

Luggage loading is ongoing for the transportation of some 3,000 people to South Sudan. This group is the second and final part of the 6,000 return caseload funded by the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). The convoy is composed of four passenger and eight luggage barges and is expected to depart on 20 December. Returnees without luggage are being prioritised, as current luggage barges are not sufficient for the target caseload. The Government of Sudan and the Government of South Sudan are yet to provide the extra 12 luggage barges to accommodate excess luggage of the returnees.

According to IOM, malaria prevalence rates amongst returnees at the Kosti way-station is thought to be around 50 per cent. Humanitarian partners are increasing bed-net distributions and are preparing to accelerate malaria awareness sessions to address the outbreak. A polio-vaccination campaign for children under five is scheduled to take place next week.

According to the government news agency, SUNA, the deadline for handing over 900 children of South Sudanese origin to the government of South Sudan has been extended from 30 December 2011 to 30 June 2012. Representatives from the National Council for Child Welfare visited the Republic of South Sudan last week to discuss the situation of the children and the efforts of the council to deliver these children to the Government of South Sudan in accordance with international standards.

5. Darfur

Government security authorities reported an increased presence of armed groups in South Darfur. They have indicated that this has led to an increased incidence of attacks on vehicles transporting food and fuel, and carjacking of 4X4 vehicles. Humanitarian actors have been warned to be vigilant and to inform relevant government authorities, including the HAC, before conducting any field missions. Areas deemed insecure by government authorities include Adoula Mountain, the Nyala – El Fasher road, Gabat al Dallam – Shaeria, and Khor Abeche. There have also been reports of the movement of armed groups near the border between South Darfur and South Sudan. However, international NGOs working in Khor Abeche are reporting that their operations, including WASH, health, and child protection for IDPs near the UNAMID team site have not been affected.

On 5 December, the HAC Commissioner in South Darfur sent a letter to all humanitarian partners allowing them to visit and provide assistance in any area of voluntary return without having to sign a specific Technical Agreement for providing such assistance.

On 8 December, the North Darfur HAC Commissioner reported the return of an estimated 3,900 people to Toma and El Manara in North Darfur from South Darfur. These areas were determined as areas of return by IOM in 2010 and are under WFP seasonal support. An inter-agency verification and assessment mission to Toma and El Manara will be forthcoming shortly.

Negotiations are ongoing between the community leaders in Kalma IDP camp and WFP, supported by OCHA, regarding the WFP-led verification exercise. The verification exercise aims at verifying beneficiary numbers for food aid. Food and NFI distributions to the camp have been put on hold until an agreement can be found – the last distribution took place in October. Humanitarian actors are concerned about possible security implications for staff in the camp, but continue to provide services, including WASH, health, and education, through national staff. It has been recommended by the authorities that all UN and international NGO staff use armed escorts when visiting the camp.

A humanitarian assessment mission to villages in Jebel Moon, West Darfur – one of the return areas – recommended improving water supplies for the 17,641 people in the area as a priority. This includes the rehabilitation of broken hand pumps, water for schools, construction of sanitation facilities and hygiene promotion. WASH sector partners will design interventions in line with the returns assistance minimum package developed by the Area Humanitarian Country Team (AHCT) in West Darfur.

According to UNICEF, nutrition surveys conducted at the start of the hunger gap (lean season between the harvests) show a higher prevalence of malnutrition over the last few years in some locations of North and South Darfur. In some of these locations, prevalence of malnutrition as measured by mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) is also high, however, mortality rates have so far remained stable and below emergency thresholds.

In order to contribute towards improving food security and the nutrition of households in Dereige, Sakaly and El Sereif IDP camps in South Darfur, the international NGO Mercy Corps will be supporting a vegetable production project using drip irrigation targeting some 4,800 people (800 households). Once fully implemented, the project is expected to improve food production of up to 80 per cent of the targeted households.

The international NGO Merlin has started to provide health services to the clinics of Khor Omer and Hay Elqubba in Ed Deain, South Darfur. The international NGO is providing drugs and running costs while the Ministry of Health is providing staff.

On 8 December, the Director General of the SMOH in North Darfur confirmed the outbreak of Diphtheria in Al Iait and El Taweisha localities and called on humanitarian agencies to provide support to contain the outbreak. Out of the 4,884 suspected cases reported, 484 cases have been clinically confirmed. According to the SMOH, the causes of the outbreak may be due to lack of water and sanitation facilities and insufficient coverage of vaccination campaigns. There are no humanitarian agencies working in health in these localities and the outbreak may have been prevented if agencies had been permitted to conduct vaccinations in the area.

On 6 December, clashes were reported in Beja village near Garsila in West Darfur, when Rizeigat camel herders reportedly grazed and destroyed farms, resulting in one person killed and two other injured. Following this initial clash, there were reports of armed men from both sides gathering at the village for possible retaliation. However, elders from both communities were brought in from Zalingei to mediate between the two groups. UN security has advised all humanitarian agencies to suspend movements in the Garsila area.