

SUDAN OPERATIONS

SUDAN SITUATION UPDATE 74

10 June 2007



Returnees from Uganda arrive at Kajo Keji and two sisters embrace as they reunite after 11 years of separation. UNHCR/M. Ilyas

SOUTH SUDAN AND BLUE NILE

Security

Peace talks between the Ugandan Government and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) mediated by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for LRA-affected areas, Joachim Chissano, resumed in Juba on 26 April after a three-month suspension. The meeting extended an earlier cessation of hostilities agreement to June, giving the LRA six weeks to leave all their hide-outs and assemble at Ri-Kwangba in Western Equatoria State, near the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Information made available indicated that LRA members have begun their East-West movement to link up with their leadership in Ri-Kwangba. Meanwhile, armed men believed to be LRA elements were reported to have attacked Dobo/Migu villages in Tore *payam* on 22 May. They abducted two women and looted shops, houses and livestock. The UN Area Security Coordinator in Yei urged the Security Management Team to take extra precautions since other groups of LRA may also be on the move to Ri-Kwangba. Tore is at security level III (transitional).

Update on repatriation operations

The reporting period was marked by the completion of the repatriation operation from the DRC. The operation, launched a year ago on 7 June 2006, ended on 2 June 2007, when the last of 10 flights chartered to transport some 470 refugees from Dungu landed in Yambio in Western Equatoria State carrying the last group of returnees. Poor road and security conditions linking Dungu in the DRC and Yambio in South Sudan had prompted UNHCR to organize an airlift of the 470 refugees living in camps near Dungu.

DRC is the second country after the Central African Republic (CAR) to complete organized repatriation to South Sudan (voluntary repatriation from CAR was officially closed on 11 April 2007). UNHCR estimates that up to 5,200 Sudanese refugees may still be living on their own in various towns and villages in the DRC. However, they have not approached UNHCR for return assistance and it is assumed that they have opted to remain in the DRC. Others may still opt to return at a later date using their own means.

Voluntary repatriation from Ethiopia to Upper Nile and Blue Nile stopped on 15 May and 5 May respectively due to the onset of the rainy season.



Photo: Last convoy from Ethiopia to Blue Nile before the rains. UNHCR/J. Musau

Meanwhile, movements by road from Uganda to Yei and Kajo Keji (Central Equatoria) and from Kakuma camp in Kenya to Eastern Equatoria continued, as did movements by air from Kakuma camp to Jonglei, Warrab, Unity and Upper Nile. Movements by road from Kakuma camp to Bor (Jonglei) via Kapoeta, Eastern Equatoria, and Juba started on 24 May. The decision to start repatriation by land to Jonglei was taken at a cross-border meeting in Kenya on 2 May, between representatives from UNHCR and GTZ.

Assisted self-repatriation during the same period continued from CAR, DRC, Egypt, Ethiopia and Uganda. Under the self-repatriation scheme, refugees receive a "voluntary repatriation form" in countries of asylum

and are assisted with return packages and reintegration support from UNHCR upon arrival in South Sudan, after presentation of their verified voluntary repatriation form.

On 2 June, repatriation of Sudanese refugees to South Sudan and Blue Nile State reached a cumulative total of 154,662 since operations started in December 2005. Of this number, 55,932 returned through organized movements, 8,214 through the assisted self-repatriation scheme and 90,516 spontaneously.



Refugees in Dungu (DRC) line up to board the last plane back to South Sudan. UNHCR/C. Hamm

First Tripartite Commission meeting with Uganda

The first Tripartite Commission meeting between the Government of Uganda, the Government of Sudan and UNHCR was held on 7-9 May in Kampala, Uganda. The Government of Uganda delegation was led by Mr. Musa Ecweru, the State Minister for Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees, while the Government of Sudan delegation was led by Mr. Alieu Ayieny Alieu, State Minister of Interior. The UNHCR delegation was led by Mr. Stefano Severe, UNHCR Representative in Uganda.

The Commission made concrete resolutions on ways of increasing the pace and volume of returns from Uganda this year using the two existing corridors (Arua-Yei-Juba and Moyo-Kajo Keji) and opening a third one to Nimule in August. During the meeting a "Framework Joint Plan of Action for Enhancing Voluntary Repatriation and Reintegration of Sudanese Refugees in Uganda" was also endorsed. Uganda hosts a total of 165,936 Sudanese refugees living in different settlements in north-western and western Uganda. In 2007, UNHCR has so far repatriated a total of 14,651 refugees from Uganda through Arua-Yei-Juba and Moyo-Kajo Keji corridors.

Following the conclusion of the meeting, UNHCR began preparatory activities in anticipation for an increase in the number of returnees from Uganda. These activities include the expansion of Alero and Kangai way stations in Yei and Kajo Keji respectively.

Second Tripartite Commission meeting with Kenya

The Tripartite Commission on repatriation of Sudanese refugees from Kenya held its second meeting on 31 May in Khartoum. The Government of Sudan delegation was led by Dr. Mohamed Ahmed M. Alaghabash, Commissioner for Refugees, while the Government of Kenya delegation was led by Mr. Emmanuel Kisombe, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of State for Immigration and Registration of Persons. The UNHCR delegation was led by Mr. Craig Sanders, UNHCR Deputy Representative in Sudan.

The Commission reviewed the progress of the repatriation operation from Kakuma camp and agreed to increase the pace of return of Sudanese refugees from Kakuma camp. Over 70,000 Sudanese refugees have been hosted by Kenya for more than 18 years. Since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005, over 25,000 have returned from Kenya to their places of origin, while an estimated 45,000 are still in Kakuma camp.

The Commission also noted the high number of spontaneous returnees from Kakuma camp compared to organized or self-assisted returns. The Commission thus called upon the Governments of Sudan and Kenya to improve border controls by ensuring that refugees moving to Sudan are in possession of voluntary repatriation forms issued by UNHCR. Improved border controls should increase the likelihood of refugees selecting the assisted self-repatriation option.

Visit of Sudanese officials to Kakuma

As one of the activities agreed upon during the first Tripartite Commission meeting with Kenya held in April in Nairobi, the Governors of Eastern Equatoria and Jonglei States and other senior officials, accompanied by the Sudanese Ambassador to Kenya and the UNHCR Representative in Kenya, visited Kakuma refugee camp on 21 May to meet Sudanese refugees and inform them of the return situation. It is hoped that the visit will boost repatriation from Kakuma camp to South Sudan.

IDP return operation in Blue Nile

The IDP return operation in Blue Nile has stopped due to the start of the rainy season. The last convoy started from Damazin to Kurmuk on 29 April, but due to heavy rainfall it was obliged to return because the road to Kurmuk was not passable. A second try was made two days later, but as it rained again, the convoy was cancelled. Since January 2007, a total of 2,903 IDPs (792 families) have been transported in 29 convoys to their places of origin in Blue Nile State with UNHCR and IOM assistance.



During the reporting period, UNHCR carried out two assessment missions in IDP return villages in Bau and Kurmuk. One mission covered the area Khor Adar, Afakao, Gambarda and Diglok, while the other mission visited Khor Bodi, Ora and Chali. The objective of both missions was to monitor the reintegration of the IDP returnees who had participated in the organized return operation.

Photo: A school is being constructed in Khor Adar. UNHCR/I. Zorn

In summary, IDP returnees have made considerable progress in rebuilding their lives. Within four months, shelter has been constructed, schools have been built and land for agriculture has been prepared. The major concern remains water. Although efforts have been made in this regard, the coverage is still inadequate. It is

recommended to consider recovery assistance to return communities after the rainy season, particularly with regard to water.

“Go and see visit” of IDP leaders from Khartoum IDP settlements

From 8 to 13 May, UNHCR organized a “go and see” visit to Blue Nile State for IDP representatives from IDP settlements in Khartoum. The purpose of the visit was to gather detailed information about the living conditions in potential areas of return in order to enable IDPs in Khartoum to make an informed decision on whether to return. The “go and see” visit represented the first assessment mission of Khartoum IDP leaders to Blue Nile State after the signing of the CPA.

The IDP representatives visited a number of return villages in Kurmuk and Rosaries Counties. They met with government authorities in Blue Nile, including the Advisor to the *Wali*, Commissioners of Counties, the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC)/Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (SRRC) and UN/NGO representatives. The IDP representatives also met with community leaders and IDP/refugee returnees. The IDP representatives were grateful to UNHCR for facilitating this visit, but expressed concern about the living conditions and lack of basic services in return areas. Following their return to Khartoum, the IDP leaders and UNHCR jointly conducted a series of community meetings in some of the IDP camps in order to share the findings of the visit.

Return of IDPs from Khartoum to Western Equatoria

A mission from IOM, UNMIS RRR, WFP and UNDSS visited Tambura and Yambio (Western Equatoria) on 4 June to prepare the ground for the pilot return of IDPs to the two counties. The arrival of the IDPs is scheduled for 19-28 June. UNHCR discussed with the mission and the local authorities about UNHCR’s role and capacity in this operation. The authorities, including SSRRC Western Equatoria State, have requested UNHCR to support the IDP return with basic reception and dispersal services. Modalities are under discussion.

Protection monitoring of IDPs in Khartoum camps

UNHCR and implementing partners continued to conduct protection monitoring activities in the IDP camps in Khartoum. A number of protection issues identified through monitoring at the IDP departure centres were shared with relevant agencies for follow up.

UNHCR and implementing partners also documented protection issues stemming from police raids in the camps. UNHCR convened and chaired several meetings for members of the Protection Working Group and legal aid NGOs to explore ways to enhance mutual cooperation, as many protection issues and incidents that are encountered require cooperation with legal aid organizations, especially in relation to legal aid for women arrested in connection with police raids. Some of the recommendations made included: enhancing reporting and information sharing to increase effectiveness of legal aid initiatives; identifying key legal concerns and making short and long term recommendations on interventions and legal reform needed; supporting training and capacity building initiatives and exploring mechanisms to assist women accused of illegal alcohol brewing with legal representation.

An ongoing initiative is the “protection and livelihood initiative” planned for 18-19 June in Khartoum. This initiative seeks to bring together protection actors with authorities and organizations involved in income generating activities. The objective is to enhance understanding of the links between lack of livelihood and protection of IDP communities and to facilitate integration of protection perspectives into livelihood programming. It also seeks to advocate for the incorporation of return perspectives into livelihood initiatives in Khartoum.

Update on funding situation as at 1 June 2007

2007 Requirements for South Sudan/Blue Nile/IDPs Khartoum/countries of asylum: US\$ 56,137,725
2007 Contributions: US\$ 32,013,398

EASTERN SUDAN

Security

The general security situation in Eastern Sudan remained stable. In line with the Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement signed between the Sudanese Government and the Eastern Front in October 2006, three leaders from the Eastern Front were appointed to senior posts in the Khartoum Government on 30 May. Together with the announced demobilisation of the Eastern Front, it is hoped that these appointments will bring further stability to Eastern Sudan.

New arrivals

Most asylum seekers continued to enter Eastern Sudan from Eritrea and Ethiopia through the area of Shagarab. In the month of May, close to 90 percent of all asylum seekers in Eastern Sudan came from Eritrea. Draft evasion and desertion remain the main reasons cited by asylum seekers for leaving Eritrea.

The breakdown of asylum seekers registered from 25 May to 6 June is as follows:

Country of origin	Registered	UAM	Recognised	Rejected	Accepted Appeal	Rejected Appeal	Otherwise Closed
Eritrea	279	6	92	1	0	1	0
Ethiopia	11	1	6	2	2	0	0
Somalia	23	0	23	0	0	0	0
Others	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	313	7	121	3	2	1	0

Deportation of asylum seekers

On 8 and 9 May, six Eritreans were deported from Kassala. Most claimed that they came to Sudan in order to escape from conscription. One among them was a new arrival from Wad Sherife who did not complete his refugee status determination procedures and left on his own from the camp. Another stated that he was a resident of Um Gargour camp, but this could not be substantiated by the Commissioner for Refugees (COR) or UNHCR. On 6 May, UNHCR staff in Kassala had been informed that these Eritreans, along with some Ethiopians, were in jail awaiting deportation ordered by the court. Despite UNHCR's efforts, the Eritreans were deported.

Detention of refugees

Thirteen refugees (recent arrivals) were arrested by law enforcement officers of Gedaref State when travelling from Kilo 26 camp to Khartoum on a hired vehicle on 1 May. They were moving at night through the back roads to avoid checkpoints as they were all without valid travel documents. The vehicle was noticed by a police patrol which opened fire, allegedly in response to the driver's refusal to obey the patrol's order to stop. This resulted in two refugees being wounded and subsequently hospitalized. Following intervention by UNHCR to prevent deportation, the authorities returned the refugees to Kilo 26 camp. The refugees are now waiting for trial. The trial has been postponed until the two who were wounded during the arrest have recovered.

Resettlement

During the reporting period, UNHCR carried out nine re-interviews of previously denied pre-'91 Ethiopian cases (three in Um Gargour, six in Abu Rakhm). At this time, only one is ready to be submitted.

The news of the review of these resettlement cases has spread in Um Gargour. Several refugees, whose resettlement cases were previously rejected, approached UNHCR asking for review of their cases.

Disruption of camp services

Following the issuance of termination letters to COR staff, some activities in the camps were interrupted during the reporting period. According to the agreement between UNHCR and COR, services in the camps would continue uninterrupted until 15 May 2007. However, the Assistant Commissioner for Refugees (ACOR), Showak, applied the Sudanese labour law and instructed the staff to work only until 30 April, leaving two weeks in May as the required handover period. This created a vacuum which left staff free to leave after 30 April. Upon insistence from UNHCR, ACOR called back the staff to resume work till 15 May 2007. During this time, there were disruptions in the refugee status determination procedure as well as service provision in the water and education sectors.

Termination benefits have now been paid to the staff of the offices of ACOR Medani and Showak. Discussions regarding the restructuring of COR are ongoing in Khartoum.

Targeted food distribution

During the preparations of the new tripartite agreement between COR, WFP and UNHCR on food assistance in the refugee camps from 1 April onwards¹, WFP had requested UNHCR to urgently update its registration information on the camp population in order to introduce a system of targeted food distribution to the most vulnerable refugees. In early April, UNHCR started updating the registration information, mainly relying on the records kept by health NGOs in the camps.

During a WFP mission to Showak from 1 to 3 June, three central criteria for target food distribution were agreed upon: families without male breadwinners, single parent families and families with members with specific needs. The determination of further criteria will be completed once all the figures of the camp population are updated.

Meanwhile, an information campaign on the planned targeted food distribution was conducted in all the refugee camps. Most refugees accepted the programme. In Um Gargour, however, the camp elders refused the idea of targeted food distribution before durable solutions for whole camp population are found. The information campaign team will return to Um Gargour to explain that the targeted food distribution cannot be postponed any longer.

Livelihood

UNHCR has been contacting several potential implementing partners, including Forest National Corporation (FNC, a government agency and implementing partner of SOLSES) and ACORD (Kassala-based NGO), to undertake livelihood activities in all the 12 camps.

UNHCR has also signed agreements with community-based organisations in the three Suki camps and in Fau 5 camp to assist their members in crop production activities. UNHCR will provide funding to the organisations, which in turn will utilise the money as revolving funds (lent before the cultivation season and returned after the harvest). Approximately 335 families are targeted for the four camps in 2007.

Update on funding situation as at 1 June 2007

2007 Requirements for East Sudan/Khartoum: US\$ 13,676,273

2007 Contributions: US\$ 4,220,902

¹Corrigendum to Sudan Situation Update 73 dated 29 April: UNHCR would like to clarify the statement made on page 12 under the Eastern Sudan/food distribution section - the reason that general food distribution did not take place in April was that the tripartite agreement on food assistance in the refugee camps was still awaiting COR's signature.

DARFUR

Security

The general security situation in West Darfur continues to be unstable and fluid. The security climate is characterized on the one hand by continuous carjacking incidents against humanitarian actors and on the other by the ongoing potential for engagements between the Sudan and Chad militaries or proxy rebel movements. A new component to the carjacking is the temporary abduction of UN/NGO staff with the vehicles as seen in Mornei and in other locations. On 30 April, two UNHCR vehicles were hijacked with six staff members on board while they were on their way for a routine visit to Um Shalaya refugee camp from Mornei. The same day, they were released unharmed and they arrived at Saraf Umra where they were brought by truck by the local population.

Following the incident, the UNHCR office in Mornei resumed operations on 20 May. However, since the road between Mornei and Um Shalaya has been reclassified from category B to D, UNHCR still cannot access the refugee camp. UNHCR continues to monitor the camp through implementing partner Concern and from El Geneina.

Population movements

UNHCR is investigating reports of a large influx of Chadians from various Arab tribes into West Darfur. Together with COR, UNHCR is conducting an in-depth analysis of the profile and situation of these persons. The new arrivals from Chad are dispersed across a wide area of territory, which is often difficult to access. The joint assessment team from UNHCR and COR will complete interviews with a substantial number of persons in the coming weeks, in order to understand their reasons for coming to Darfur from Chad and assess whether there may be any persons with urgent humanitarian needs.

No conclusions can yet be drawn with regard to the status of the new arrivals of Arab populations from Chad. It is clear that some Arab tribes have been affected by the conflict in eastern Chad. The purpose of this joint assessment by UNHCR and COR is to understand whether the persons arriving in Darfur have fled for reasons related to the conflict or for other reasons.

Apart from Chadian arrivals of Arab origin, important displacements of Sudanese nationals, namely from the Masalit group, and CAR nationals from Um Dafok have been reported in Um Dukhun. In addition, Sudanese returnees have also been reported in Um Dukhun.

UNMIS and OCHA teams visited Um Dukhun on 4-5 June and reported that 200 IDP families from Um Dafok arrived last week in Um Dukhun. Another 40 families arrived on 5 June. The situation of these IDPs is described as critical. They said that they are fleeing attacks by Arab militia. They also mentioned that the land they are occupying does not originally belong to them (Masalit arrived in the area in 1984 during the drought from El Geneina). They also reported that more people are expected to come to Um Dukhun, but are prevented from crossing to safe areas.

On 6 June, UNHCR sent two trucks with non-food items to Um Dukhun and Bindisi for immediate distribution to the new arrivals. WFP has emergency food in stock and will deliver rations.

Mission to Shukri

Following the visits to Shukri (20 kilometres west of El Geneina town) on 27 February and 7 April, UNHCR organized food and non-food item distribution in Shukri on 28 April for about 350 Chadian families. The convoy that included UNHCR, WFP, COR and CAM (medical NGO) was escorted by AMIS Protection Force. COR, assisted by UNHCR, proceeded with registration; CAM vaccinated children under five; WFP distributed food for 350 households; and UNHCR provided non-food items (plastic sheeting, mats, jerry cans and kitchen sets) for the same number of households.

It was reiterated in the meeting with the community leaders that this was a one-time assistance and further assistance would be available in the Um Shalaya refugee camp. No further assistance will be provided in the border area.

Um Shalaya refugee camp

Registration has been suspended since the hijacking incident on 30 April. According to COR, 462 individuals (151 families) have been registered by COR since the last date on which UNHCR conducted registration at the camp on 24 April. The total number of refugees in the Um Shalaya camp is 5,332 persons as of 7 June.

Zalingei IDP camps

During the reporting period, the number of serious security incidents in the Zalingei DP camps increased and tension between the Government and IDPs remained remarkably high. An increased presence of armed people in the camp was reported.

Meanwhile, a discussion paper on politicisation of youth in the IDP camps was discussed at the Protection Working Group meeting on 30 April in Zalingei. A youth focus group of concerned agencies met on 7 May to examine the issue more closely. As part of the follow-up, International Rescue Committee (IRC) arranged a youth meeting at Hemidya camp on 17 May, attended by 30 IDP youth, including ten females, and concerned agencies, i.e., UNHCR, OCHA, UNMIS, CARE, NCA, DRC, IMC, MC and SUDO. As a first priority, the youth requested support to have a youth centre to be used for recreation, meetings and information distribution. The youth also requested various facilities at the centre, sewing machines, a vehicle, workshops for carpentry and income generation activities for women.

The agencies in turn shared concern over recent attacks on field staff by IDP youth. The youth fully agreed that field staff from humanitarian agencies are to be secured while operating in the camps. The youth and *Sheikhs* present at the meeting promised to take responsibility for maintaining a secure working environment for the agencies.

Visit to Jabel Marra

On 8-10 May, UNHCR visited Jabel Marra and assessed the needs of the SLA-controlled villages of Thur, Boldon, Galol and Kutrum. It was found that there is a need for profiling of these villages in order to ascertain the number and ethnicity of persons in each village. Given that the area has recently opened up to international agencies for the first time in years, there will be an increase in assistance and subsequent movements of populations. Collection of baseline data is critical for the fulfillment of UNHCR's return/protection mandate and very useful for all humanitarian agencies wishing to engage in Jabel Marra.

Missions to Zalingei Rural

On 1 May, UNHCR and Danish Refugee Council (DRC) undertook a mission to monitor reported returns to villages south of Zalingei Rural, from where there were some 3,000 displacements to Deleij in February 2007. UNHCR visited Beregi (the village where the violent incidents that caused the displacement took place) and Waro. UNHCR discovered that many of the inhabitants are interested in returning from Deleij before the rainy season. However, their protection situation remains precarious (with ongoing violence against villagers by Arab militia). The need for assistance, including non-food items, was also observed.

On 20 May, UNHCR also visited Traige and Orkum in Zalingei Rural to assess rehabilitation activities by DRC and monitor any return movement back to the villages from the IDP camps in Zalingei. Overall, the rehabilitation activities with focus on income generation and primary and adult literacy education have been functioning well, together with health care activities by national NGOs. Return of IDPs to these villages, however, has not been observed apart from their temporary return during the cultivation season. According to the *Sheikhs* and the villagers, the IDPs are still in fear of facing insecurity vis-à-vis Arab nomads.

Alcohol production in the EI Geneina IDP camps

As a result of the government alcohol prevention campaign in Ardamata village, many alcohol producers moved to Dorti camp to avoid the police. UNHCR brought this issue to the attention of the IDPs and the Government because of the increased presence of armed men in the camp, which is linked to increases in thefts and assaults. The IDP representatives agreed with the Government to have bi-weekly meetings concerning alcohol production/consumption in the IDP camps. They started advising those who produce alcohol to stop it or the police will intervene. Some of the alcohol producers seem to be reluctant. UNHCR is closely monitoring developments in the camp and coordinating with the police and other government authorities.

Incident reporting pilot project

The new standardized incident reporting pilot project, being trialled in the EI Geneina camps by the UN, implementing partners and the AU, has been running for over a month and is already showing some trends, highlighting that at certain times of day or certain areas of the camps, the risk of incidents occurring is higher. It is too early in the project to provide recommendations on a broad scale, but the initial results are encouraging.

Sexual and gender-based violence training

On 23-24 May, UNHCR conducted an inter-agency sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) awareness training in Mukjar. There were 20 participants (eight female and 12 male) from different agencies, including UNHCR, WFP, IMC, Mercy Corps, CARE and Save the Children-Spain, as well as AU CivPol.

On 5 June, UNHCR participated in a workshop on SGBV referral pathway organised by IRC. During the discussion, participants decided to appoint focal points in every IDP camp to deal with survivors of SGBV. MSF agreed to maintain the lead in providing post-sexual violence medical care. UNHCR agreed to plan, coordinate and conduct trainings for *Sheikhs* and community leaders on SGBV, its consequences and how to provide support to survivors.

Technical assessment mission

Following the request of the UN Humanitarian Coordinator that UNHCR take the lead on the camp coordination/camp management (CCCM) cluster, a Senior Emergency Officer from UNHCR Headquarters undertook a technical assessment mission in Darfur from 24 April to 16 May. His mission was to assess and report on the requirements for UNHCR achieving a phased-in approach to taking over certain responsibilities for CCCM in West Darfur. He visited UNHCR and OCHA in EI Geneina, Mornei, Nyala and EI Fasher and met with UN agencies and NGOs, including OCHA, UNMIS, WFP, Concern, Save the Children, Terre des Hommes, IRC, DRC, Sudanese Red Crescent, Spanish Red Cross, HelpAge, and HAC representatives.

Update on funding situation as at 1 June 2007

2007 Requirements for Darfur: US\$ 19,739,131

2007 Contributions: US\$ 8,673,378