ACHIEVEMENTS
IN SOUTH SUDAN IN 2005

Director’s Office for the Sudan Situation
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The first repatriation movement conducted by UNHCR since the signing of the peace agreement brought refugees home from Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya on 17 December 2005. Photos by UNHCR/H. Caux
OBJECTIVES
UNHCR’s overarching aim in South Sudan in 2005 was to help create conditions conducive for the return and reintegration of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) to common areas of origin and to initiate voluntary repatriation of refugees to South Sudan. The emphasis during the pre-rainy season (January to May 2005) was on supporting spontaneous returnees, refugees and IDPs as well as receiving communities to prevent renewed displacement and develop the absorption capacity of returnee areas. The focus in the rainy and post-rainy season (June to December 2005) was on establishing logistical capacity for voluntary repatriation and starting the repatriation operation, while continuing to enhance the absorption capacity of returnee areas.

In 2005, UNHCR was also requested by the Humanitarian Coordinator to play, under the coordination of the Returns and Reintegration Section of the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), a lead role in assisting with the protection, return and reintegration of IDPs in greater Equatoria (Eastern, Central and Western Equatoria States) and Blue Nile State, which are also areas of substantial refugee return.

CHALLENGES
It must be noted that UNHCR faced enormous challenges in South Sudan. When UNHCR first established presence in main return areas following the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in early 2005, it found the capacity of local institutions and communities far from ready to receive returnees. Basic services were extremely limited or non-existent and what little infrastructure was to be found, was completely destroyed. Yet, no development actors were present in these areas and suitable partners to implement reintegration projects were few. Moreover, the vastness of the region, coupled with extremely poor roads, made the logistics of moving staff and other resources tremendously complex. Added to these difficulties were problems of security—the security situation remained volatile throughout the year, due to tribal conflict as well as activity by militia groups and the Uganda-based Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA). This often resulted in restricted access and, in some instances, the temporary suspension of planned activities. Furthermore, large swathes of land in South Sudan are infested with mines and, although significant efforts have been made to de-mine areas and routes of return, the task ahead remains immense. The greatest challenge, however, was inadequate and irregular funding which hampered UNHCR’s ability to complete critical preparatory activities. A total of US$ 45 million in contributions were received in 2005 against a budget of US$ 76 million which included activities in countries of asylum; the year ended with a shortfall of more than US$ 30 million.

ACHIEVEMENTS
Despite these challenges, UNHCR achieved many of its objectives in 2005. Agreements were reached with 18 implementing partners to carry out over 100 community-based reintegration projects (CBRPs). These projects aimed to establish conditions conducive to the sustainable return and reintegration of returnees and to benefit both returnees and receiving communities. While considerable progress was made in implementing these projects, with some successfully concluded by the end of the year, some could not be completed in 2005 due to the unstable security situation.

Other significant achievements in 2005 include the establishment of presence in key return areas and opening of 11 offices (Bor, Damazin, Juba, Kajo Keji, Kapoeta, Malakal, Nasir, Rum-
bebek, Tambura, Yambio and Yei) as well as the deployment of emergency response teams, in February and November, which provided technical support and boosted UNHCR staff presence. This enabled UNHCR to strengthen its protection monitoring as well as assistance planning and implementation capacity.

Furthermore, UNHCR and partners established logistical capacity by setting up logistics support hubs, re-deploying and procuring a fleet of trucks and road equipment as well as pre-positioning non-food items to support organized return. The first organized return took place before the end of 2005. By the end of the year, UNHCR had also reached agreement with Sudan and three countries of asylum – with the Central African Republic (CAR), the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Kenya respectively – to sign tripartite agreements that establish the legal framework for helping Sudanese refugees go home. These agreements were expected to be signed in January 2006. Tripartite agreements with Ethiopia and Uganda were also being negotiated.

1. PROTECTION

In 2005, UNHCR’s protection activities aimed at creating conditions conducive to the voluntary, safe and dignified return of the displaced. The main activities were to support the capacity of receiving communities in order to ensure legal, physical and material security for returnees through community-based protection responses and capacity-building activities as well as promotion of fair land and property restitution/allocation and confidence-building and reconciliation. To implement these activities, UNHCR worked with the authorities, UN agencies, protection-oriented NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs).

Moreover, UNHCR chaired the Protection Working Groups in the South and the Protection Working Group in Khartoum (which deals with issues relating to the North-South return operation) and led with the development of strategies. The Framework on the Return and Reintegration and the activities and programmes in the “Protection and Human Rights” sector of the UN Work Plan 2006 were developed through these Protection Working Groups.

Capacity-building activities

In line with its protection strategy, UNHCR has been building the capacity of the Government, local institutions and the civil society at large to create a receptive environment in areas of return by providing material support and training on returnee/refugee principles. In 2005, UNHCR delivered material support and legal reference books to the Judiciary Resource Centre in Rumbek, which is the Judiciary headquarters, and the office of the Court of Appeals in South Sudan as well as material assistance to the mobile court system in Lakes and the Police Academy in Equatoria. UNHCR also initiated human rights training for police cadets at the Yei Police Academy and so far trained 226 cadets. In addition, UNHCR continues to give lectures at the Yei Institute for Strategic Studies. Moreover, UNHCR and UNDP jointly conducted a human rights training for 70 army officers and soldiers at the military base in Juba.

Trainings on HIV/AIDS and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) were also undertaken to raise the awareness of the police, army officers and teachers. More trainings are planned in 2006, particularly for soldiers at border entry points who are not familiar with the basic rights of refugees and IDPs and the changing role of the military in times of peace.

Protection monitoring system

UNHCR and partners established protection networks and a protection monitoring system through training of local authorities and chiefs, NGOs and CBOs in Northern Bahr el Ghazal to prepare the communities to receive large numbers of returnees as well as returnees in-transit. Inter-agency network trainings, developed though the Protection Working Group South Sudan, will be further undertaken in 2006 in main areas of return and areas of transit where way stations are being set up. To support the Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (SRRC) “tracking and monitoring system,”
UNHCR and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) supported the establishment of SRRC field monitoring teams to monitor return movements and, in particular, the training of enumerators and field protection monitors. UNHCR and NRC also developed a joint training module on refugees/IDPs and returnees and assisted OCHA and SRRC in the training of enumerators and field protection monitors in Bahr el Ghazal, Upper Nile and greater Equatoria. UNHCR also discussed alternative and complimentary methods of returnee monitoring with the support of implementing partners and it ran a returnee monitoring programme with IRC in Juba. In addition, UNHCR, UNICEF and Save the Children-UK entered into discussion to operationalize family tracing and reunification during return movements and are working towards a strategy document that will be finalised at the beginning of 2006.

Promotion of fair land and property, restitution and allocation
Initial returnee monitoring indicated that land and property restitution is of main concern to facilitate the reintegration of returnees. UNHCR, FAO and NRC co-funded a “land and property study” in 2004 that was finalised in February 2005. Land and property workshops were held in Rumbek and Yei and 10 state-level workshops will be held in 2006 to discuss fair land allocation and retribution, dispute settlement and land mediation in the return process. These workshops are developed and held in coordination with the Judiciary of South Sudan, the Secretariat of Legal Affairs (SOLA) and the local authorities. In Juba, UNHCR organized several meetings with a number of influential local and tribal chiefs to discuss matters related to conflict between returnees and local communities over land and to women’s rights to own land. With UNDP, UNICEF and HABITAT and at the request of the SPLM/A Secretariats for Local Governance and Infrastructure, UNHCR is also taking part in a study to obtain better information on the challenges related to urban integration in South Sudan. UNHCR actively supports the study by providing expertise and logistical support.

Promotion of confidence-building and reconciliation
UNHCR also promoted confidence-building and reconciliation, through peace education and cultural awareness initiatives to ensure sustainability of the return and foster coexistence among the communities. In particular, UNHCR undertook teacher training in peace education, in order to spread the message of peace through the school curricula, and negotiated with the Secretariat of Education to include peace education in the primary school curricula. Through PACT, UNHCR established and supported 15 peace committees in Eastern Equatoria and Eastern Upper Nile to help the communities resolve long-running conflicts and work together to promote peace and reconciliation at the local level. In addition, UNHCR facilitated dialogue between women and youth groups in refugee camps and in communities of origin through “go and see” visits.

Protection assistance to IDPs
Under the UN Work Plan 2006, UNHCR submitted proposals for protection assistance on behalf of IDPs in Khartoum, Kassala and Blue Nile States in the context of return to South Sudan. The proposed projects – protection monitoring, capacity building, “go and see” visits and provision of objective information on areas of return – aim to train partners on protection issues and develop their capacity to safeguard the rights of IDPs as well as to allow UNHCR to undertake systematic monitoring in the IDP camps to ensure that protection issues are identified and addressed. The first training work-
shop took place in December in Khartoum for Government officials, including from the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC), SRRC, security forces, the police and key officials from the Re-Planning Department of the Ministry of Interior. The main topics covered were the IDP Guiding Principles, the Interim Constitution and CPA, the Joint Policy Framework and human rights principles pertaining to the protection of IDPs at the places of displacement as well as within the context of return.

Furthermore, UNHCR visited six IDP camps/settlements in and around Khartoum to meet with the IDP communities. The sites visited were Jebel Aulia, Mayo, Soba, Korton Kassala, Geborona and Wade Albashir. These IDPs originate mainly from Western Equatoria and had previously approached UNHCR to assist in facilitating their return to their places of origin. The overall objective of the visits was to listen to the IDPs’ concerns in order to identify areas of intervention and plan for protection and community service-related assistance programmes.

Protection assistance to IDPs in Khartoum and Kassala State are strictly linked to return to South Sudan. UNHCR’s role will end when those identified for return are back in the South and will not extend to those who opt to remain in Khartoum and Kassala.

IDP survey in North and South Sudan

Between March and June 2005, HAC, UNHCR, IOM, OCHA, WHO, UNICEF, NRC and Fellowship for African Relief (FAR) participated in the funding and implementation of a survey on IDP intentions concerning return to their places of origin in Khartoum and other IDP locations in the North, Eastern and Central areas of Sudan. UNHCR wrote the terms of reference for the survey to ensure protection approaches. A total of 7,020 households (44,238 persons) were interviewed. Among the southern Sudanese, 80 percent said that they would return, while 10 percent said that they had not decided yet and another 10 percent that they would not return. This survey was used to design a similar one for IDPs in the South. The survey in South Sudan was prepared by UNHCR, IOM, OCHA, UNFPA, NRC and SRRC between August and October and implementation started in November. The first results were expected in February 2006.

2. COMMUNITY-BASED ASSISTANCE

UNHCR and partners implemented a number of CBRPs in the sectors of water and sanitation, health, education and food security and livelihoods. These CBRPs were kick-started by an emergency response team deployed to greater Equatoria in February.

Water and sanitation

To improve access to safe drinking water for returnees and receiving communities, UNHCR and partners rehabilitated 43 boreholes and drilled 41 new ones through implementing partners such International Aid Services (IAS), American Refugee Committee (ARC), World Vision International (WVI) and Swedish Free Mission (SFM). Other planned boreholes could not be completed due to security problems and inaccessibility, mainly in rural areas of Western and Central Equatoria. Water committees were formed and trained to manage the boreholes on behalf of the communities. In addition, the communities were trained in sanitation.

Health

To strengthen the capacity of referral hospitals and improve access to preventive and curative services, UNHCR, in collaboration with local counterparts, WHO and UNICEF, constructed
and rehabilitated hospitals and public health centres as well as provided them with equipment, medical supplies and training. The hospital and medical training institute in Yei were identified as priorities, as they receive many referrals and students from counties within and outside Equatoria. Work included construction and rehabilitation of the overall structure, maternity wards, laboratory premises and a dormitory for the medical training institute. Medical equipment and materials were delivered to the hospital and key staff were trained.

Construction and rehabilitation of the hospital in Yambio, which is the only referral hospital for communities from four counties in that region and for returnees from CAR and the DRC, is ongoing in conjunction with African Development and Emergency Organization (ADEO). With UNHCR’s support, an extension of the paediatric wing of the hospital in Rumbek was completed by Comitato Collaborazione Medica together with electrification of the entire building. The rehabilitation of the paediatric and OPD wards of the hospital in Maridi was also completed through Aktion Afrika Hilfe (AAH). UNHCR also handed over nine ambulances to hospitals in Kajo Keji, Maridi, Tambura, Yambio and Yei.

Furthermore, construction and rehabilitation work is underway at 11 primary health care centres and 25 primary health care units. UNHCR and partners also conducted community outreach programmes and training on HIV/AIDS and SGBV in Kajo Keji and Yei counties as well as in Yambio.

**Education**

As the quality of education in UNHCR refugee camps across the border is relatively high, efforts are being made to boost the quality of education in South Sudan and make conditions conducive to the return of refugees. In 2005, UNHCR started building or rehabilitating schools and providing scholastic materials to upgrade the current infrastructure and improve the quality of education in South Sudan. The locations chosen are areas of high return of refugees. UNHCR is providing training for teachers in both subject matter and methodology. Important cross-cutting issues are included in training programmes, such as peace-building and awareness of girl child education, SGBV and HIV/AIDS.

In addition, UNHCR aims to tackle gender disparities in education by using a multi-pronged approach. This includes the appointment of female girl child coordinators in schools, building of girls’ dormitories, provision of sanitary materials, partial payment of school fees for girls and sensitisation of the community on the importance of girls going to school.

UNHCR currently has work in progress at 35 primary and five secondary schools as well as four girls’ dormitories. More than 200 teachers were trained in 2005. During the year, UNHCR also provided support to Juba Day Secondary School, which is the only secondary school in Juba that has an English curriculum and there-
fore receives many returnee students. Assistance to the school included construction of a borehole and pit latrines as well as fencing and distribution of school stationary.

UNHCR is coordinating closely with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology at both Government of South Sudan and county levels. For sustainability, UNHCR recognise the importance of building the capacity of the Ministry and therefore supported the county education offices with equipment in various locations. UNHCR also collaborates with other key education agencies working in South Sudan, such as UNICEF and the Sudan Basic Education Programme.

**Food security and livelihoods**

With the aim of improving access to sustainable livelihood opportunities for returnees, receiving communities and vulnerable households, UNHCR, together with FAO, local authorities and NGOs, conducted needs assessments in the five counties of Kajo Keji, Lainya, Morobo, Yambio and Yei. As a result, 3,000 kits of seeds and tools were distributed to vulnerable people among the returnees and host communities in Lainya, Morobo and Yei. In addition, 2,500 kits of seeds and tools for distribution to individual family returnees in three of the counties of Western Equatoria were procured, to be complemented by agricultural training for 200 households by early 2006. In Kajo Keji, income generation equipment (two grinding mills, two brick machines, two *lulu* pressing machines) was procured for CBOs, mostly women’s groups. In addition, 48 women were trained in business. In Yei, three grinding mills were provided to CBOs.

Moreover, UNCHR supported the Diocese of Yei in improving the vocational training centre for assisting school drop-outs, youth, ex-soldiers, victims of war and persons with disabilities. Construction of three dormitories was also completed and equipment provided, enabling the centre to enhance its skills training capacity, particularly in the area of carpentry, brick-making and handicraft. In Torit, 50 farmers were trained and assisted in bee-hive project management.

### 3. Establishing Logistical Capacity

**Logistics support hub**

In preparation for repatriation, UNHCR, with the assistance of partners, set up a logistics support hub in Yei and satellite stations in Tambura and Yambio. The logistics support hub in Yei includes a fleet of trucks, a mechanical workshop, a fuel supply base and a warehouse. Through re-deployment and procurement, UNHCR received assorted non-food items which are stored at the warehouse, including plastic sheeting (24,450 pcs), blankets (40,000 kits), mosquito nets (36,450 pcs), jerry cans (39,699 pcs), soap (32,000 pcs) and sleeping mats (32,000 pcs). These non-food items were also used for assistance to the IDPs in Yei. In principle, UNICEF and other agencies are tasked under the Inter-Agency Working Group guidelines to provide assistance to IDPs in transit. However, as the other agencies had no stock in Yei and the IDP situation needed urgent attention, UNHCR provided the non-food items.

**Assessment missions**

To update its repatriation operations plan, UNHCR fielded a logistics mission to greater Equatoria in July, covering the entire stretch from Kaya, near the Ugandan border, to Tambura, near CAR. The mission also visited the DRC and CAR to finalize plans for repatriation. The mission identified two main return corridors: 1) from Rudu, DRC, via Aba and Laso Convoy for repatriation from CAR. UNHCR/V. Jerinkic
mainly to Yei by road and 2) from Mboki, CAR, mainly to Tambura by air. The repatriation from the DRC could not be implemented in 2005 due to LRA activity. The repatriation from CAR, planned for the last quarter of 2005, was postponed due to the eruption of inter-ethnic clashes in Western Equatoria in November. In the meantime, however, UNHCR finalized arrangements with IOM to implement air repatriation to Tambura.

In September, the UN Country Team fielded an inter-agency multi-sector mission to Blue Nile State in the context of preparations for the UN Work Plan 2006. The mission was composed of representatives from OCHA, UNICEF, WFP, FAO, WHO, IRC and was led by UNHCR on account of its lead role for return and reintegration in the state. On the ground, the mission was joined by HAC and SRRC. The aim was to provide a realistic outline of the state priorities, planning assumptions and sectoral activities for inclusion in the Work Plan. In Damazin, the mission met with Government state officials and in Kurmuk with the local SPLM authorities. Both Government and SPLM officials expressed their willingness to receive returnees (IDPs and refugees) and to facilitate “go and see visits.” The mission identified major return areas and recommended that UNHCR in Ethiopia share detailed information on the final destinations of expected refugee returnees.

Subsequently, in October, UNHCR carried out a return and reintegration assessment mission to the area and crossed into Gambella (Ethiopia) to consolidate plans for repatriation of some 18,000-20,000 refugees from Ethiopian camps into Chali and its cluster villages via Kurmuk. Following the mission, a UNHCR engineer conducted a technical assessment for the repair of the Kurmuk-Chali road (some 70 kilometres) to ensure that repatriation from Ethiopia is conducted in safety and dignity. He also conducted an assessment for the construction of a reception centre in Chali which will provide transit facilities for the returnees for a maximum period of three days. Both the Kurmuk-Chali road and the land for the reception centre in Chali are being surveyed for mines.

In addition, throughout the year UNHCR undertook several assessment missions to main return areas, such as Bor, Kajo Keji, Kapoeta, Pochalla, Yambio and Yei, to assess access to basic services, identify operational partners and possible project interventions as well as to review protection concerns and monitoring and tracking of returnees.

Deployment of emergency response teams
In addition to the emergency response teams deployed in February to initiate CBRPs, UNHCR deployed four emergency response teams on 15 November to prepare the ground for repatriation operations. One roving team was based in Juba while the other teams established presence in Bor, Kapoeta and Nasir. The teams brought with them 37 tons of equipment, including office tents, rations and field kits as well as telecommunications equipment, in order to quickly set up new offices and waystations in preparation for the repatriation of refugees from Kenya and Ethiopia.

Way stations
UNHCR planned to establish eight primary way stations in South Sudan. Each way station will have the capacity for 500 persons and will be situated on a large plot of land to allow for expansion if necessary. By the end of 2005, sites for the way stations in Bor, Chali, Kapoeta,
Juba, Malakal, Tambura, Yambio and Yei had been identified and most had been surveyed for mines. The way stations are at different stages of construction but all are expected to be completed by the end of March 2006. The way station in Tambura was completed in early 2006.

Roads
Repair work on priority roads and the improvement of bridges on the main routes of return is ongoing. UNHCR procured and received road-moving equipment to support initiatives to rehabilitate some feeder roads leading to key repatriation routes such as Yei-Lasu (manually de-mined by Mines Advisory Group), Yambio-Ezo-Tambura and Yambio-Maridi roads. The activity, through GTZ, involves intensive community involvement.

De-mining
Under the coordination of the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS), UNHCR supported mapping of landmine presence in return areas and along return routes as well as mine clearing activities. De-mining took place along most of the Juba-Yei road and thirteen kilometers of the Yei-Lasu road have been de-mined. Mine awareness training also started in returnee areas and in refugee camps.

4. ASSISTED RETURNS

Refugees
In November and December, UNHCR organized the first “go and see” visits. UNHCR took refugee representatives from Mboki camp in CAR and Kakuma camp in Kenya to visit their areas of origin in South Sudan. These visits gave the refugees the opportunity to see first hand the situation at home and meet with the local authorities, the local communities, their family and friends. Upon return to the camps, the refugee leaders held mass meetings with the refugee population and spoke about their impressions. Shortly thereafter, the first groups of refugees - a total of 131 people - returned to South Sudan from Kakuma camp with UNHCR’s assistance. This marked the first organized repatriation movement conducted by UNHCR since the signing of the CPA in January 2005. A group of 67 refugees returned to Bor by air, while another group of 64 refugees returned to Kapoeta and Chukudum by land. All the returnees were given non-food items and WFP distributed six-week food rations. In 2006, during the dry season, UNHCR expects to assist another 10,000 refugees to return home from Kakuma camp and about 50,000 to return from camps in other neighboring countries.

In addition to “go and see” visits, UNHCR is implementing mass information campaigns in CAR, DRC, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda to enable the refugees to make an informed decision on whether to return. The campaigns include leaflets and videos with information on repatriation procedures as well as the situation in South Sudan and the conditions for return. The UNHCR information strategy was drawn up and implemented in coordination with other agencies within the SICR network.

There are also 6,800 Congolese refugees who have been living in South Sudan for more than 40 years. These refugees fled the DRC in the years 1965-1968 to escape post-independence chaos and fighting as well as the coup that brought Mobutu Sese Seko to power. Even though a large number of them were born in South Sudan and are integrated in Sudanese society, the majority expresses a strong desire to go back to their homeland. With the participation of the Commissioner for Refugees (COR), UNHCR completed the repatriation registration process for these refugees at the end of
2005. A tripartite agreement between the DRC, Sudan and UNHCR was expected to be signed in early 2006 to establish the legal framework for their voluntary repatriation.

IDPs
Together with other UN agencies and NGOs, UNHCR was also involved in assisting a group of 12,000 displaced Bor Dinka with an estimated 500,000 to 1.5 million heads of cattle to return to Bor, their original home. The Bor Dinka have been displaced for more than 15 years in the western part of the country where they had split up in 34 cattle camps. Their return route is through Juba as they have to cross from the west to the east side of the Nile River on their way home to Bor. The UN agencies and NGOs set up a temporary way station at Lologo, approximately 10 kilometres southwest of Juba, where they are providing services to the vulnerable (mainly elderly persons, women and children). UNHCR is registering the returnees and providing protection monitoring as the group transits through Lologo. While IOM is transporting the vulnerable IDPs by barge from Juba to Bor, the younger men are driving the cattle back to Bor along the Nile River, escorted by the SPLM/A.

During the last two months of 2005, Yei experienced several influxes of IDPs, mainly of Bor Dinka origin, from Western Equatoria, reportedly totalling more than several thousand people. Following inter-agency assessments, it was acknowledged that these IDPs are a vulnerable caseload, the majority being women and children. UNHCR, in cooperation with OCHA, coordinated an IDP Working Group with UN agencies, NGOs and local authorities to assess and coordinate the protection and humanitarian needs of these IDPs as well as to address the local community’s concerns. The IDP Working Group also looked into assisting them to return to Bor through Juba. The group will coordinate with the Return Inter-Agency Working Group and authorities in Juba and Bor their return home in early 2006.