

Key Points

- In South Darfur, according to UNAMID, the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) conducted air strikes on 27 December in the area of Ed Deain, apparently targeting Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) forces. Two civilians were reportedly killed.
- In South Kordofan, fighting between SAF and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) continues to affect civilians. The humanitarian community is increasingly concerned at reports of declining food security and the health situation in SPLM-N areas.
- In the Abyei Area, UNHCR reports that the increasing numbers of people transiting through Agok for possible returns further north is straining food security of both displaced and host communities.
- In Khartoum, the Commission of Voluntary and Humanitarian Work (CVHW) and UNHCR have registered some 93,000 people for voluntarily return to South Sudan.

1. South Kordofan and Blue Nile states

Conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement – North (SPLM-N) continues in South Kordofan State, severely affecting civilians. According to reports received by the UN, more people in SPLM-N held areas have been displaced and are now taking refuge in open areas or dry riverbeds. Some people who were formerly displaced to Kauda have reportedly been displaced for a second time and are now exposed to cold weather and water shortages.

International humanitarian agencies maintain limited operations in government-held areas of the state through national staff, but international staff have not been granted permission to travel to the state. The Government has not allowed the delivery of humanitarian assistance into SPLM-N held areas and, as such, the humanitarian community in Sudan is growing increasingly concerned at reports from refugees crossing into South Sudan of declining food security, increasing malnutrition and health concerns in these areas.

On 27 and 29 December, the government's Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) reported that 75 displaced people arrived in Abu Gebeiha town from areas of Warni and Angartu, and were provided with food and non-food items. HAC also reported that displaced people arrived in Dilling and Debabiat towns from El Farshaya and surrounding villages, but the number of displaced people has not been confirmed. The Sudanese Red Crescent Society (SRCS) reports that 200 people arrived in Kadugli town from Heiban, Masakeen and Krungo. SRCS has supported these people with non-food items.

According to UNICEF, the state polio vaccination campaign covered over 375,800 children under five years of age. Due to insecurity, however, approximately 151,000 could not be reached during this vaccination campaign.

The security situation in Blue Nile has been generally calm, however the UN has received reports of fighting between SAF and SPLM-N some 60 kilometres southeast of Ed Damazine town in Bau locality. International humanitarian agencies have been permitted to return to the state, however humanitarian operations can only be conducted through national staff and are limited to areas in and around Ed Damazine town. UNHCR reports that some 37,000 people have fled to Ethiopia since the fighting erupted in September 2011.

2. Abyei Area

Over 110,000 people remain displaced from the Abyei Area, the majority of whom are now living in Agok town in the south of the Abyei Area, as well as in Unity and Warrap States in South Sudan. Some individuals and families continue to move from South Sudan up to the Agok area south of the Bahr el Arab/ Kiir river, whilst others continue to explore conditions north of the river. Only limited permanent returns north of the river have been observed.

UNHCR reports increasing strains within the displaced and host communities in Agok, in particularly over food security because of the growing numbers of people using the town as a transit area for possible return north of the river.

Displaced people have reported to UNHCR that it is unlikely that they will return to their areas of origin until they see significant progress on the ground. Specifically, displaced people in Agok have stated that they require the withdrawal of both SAF and SPLA troops, greater clarity on the new administration of the Abyei Area, greater confidence in the ability of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) to fulfil its mandate, and more food assistance and livelihood opportunities.

3. Darfur

The security situation in the eastern and southeastern areas of South Darfur remains tense. On 27 December, according to the United Nations and African Union Hybrid Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), SAF conducted air strikes on villages in the area of Ed Deain, including El Jalabi (12 km east of Ed Deain), El Gidamia (30 km southeast of Ed Deain) and El Joghhan (40 km southeast of Ed-Deain). According to UNAMID, SAF were apparently targeting Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) forces, however two civilians were reportedly killed. According to reports received by the UN, nine people, including civilians, were also killed in fighting between SAF and JEM in El Joghhan village.

UN inter-agency assessments indicate that Tine, Korno and other areas in the Dar Zaghawa area of North Darfur are currently suffering food shortages. After a rapid agriculture and livestock assessment undertaken by the Ministry of Agriculture, the government reported that it would consider releasing federal food reserves to cover the shortage. The World Food Programme (WFP) are awaiting the government's response, the results of a post-harvest assessment and results of the food security monitoring system to determine whether an intervention is necessary.

Humanitarian agencies operating in Zalingei, West Darfur, report that fuel supplies to the town have been significantly disrupted following government clashes with JEM in North Kordofan last week. Some humanitarian activities have been interrupted, including the water supply to 116,000 displaced people in Zalingei camps.

The NGO Islamic Relief (ISRA) reports that on 31 December it discontinued health intervention activities in the Nyoro return village, West Darfur. ISRA had been providing health training and supplying pharmaceuticals to returnees in Nyoro.

The State Ministry of Health in West Darfur reports completion of the polio vaccination campaign, covering 71 percent of targeted children.

4. Sudan – South Sudan population movements

Although the primary responsibility for the movement of people of South Sudanese origin from Sudan to South Sudan lies with the Governments of Sudan and South Sudan, many people still await transportation south. The Commission of Voluntary and Humanitarian Work (CVHW) and UNHCR are currently registering all people of South Sudanese origin in Khartoum who wish to return voluntarily to South Sudan. As of 1 January, approximately 93,000 people were registered. According to CVHW, public information campaigns encouraging the registration of returnees ended on 27 December 2011, however, broadcast of registration information continues through mobile phones and social media.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM), UNHCR, and local partners have been assisting with the return operation through the provision of additional barges for those stranded at the Kosti way-station and air flights for extremely vulnerable individuals. In order to relieve pressure on concentration points in Khartoum, IOM is arranging train movements from Khartoum to Wau and Aweil in South Sudan over the next two months.