

Highlights

- Humanitarian response to people displaced by recent clashes in Unity State in southern Sudan has begun; however, insecurity restricts access to the affected population.
- Concerns over safety and security of humanitarian workers remain in southern Sudan, where some agencies continue to restrict their movements and activities.
- New clashes in Abyei leave 13 military personnel dead. No civilian casualties or displacement reported.
- State assembly and gubernatorial elections in South Kordofan pass peacefully.
- In Darfur, missions take place to Kutum and Ein Siro as part of Operation Springbasket, but a planned mission to Tok Jau is postponed.

1. North-South population movements

The Government of National Unity continues to organise movements of returnees from Khartoum to southern Sudan through the Ministry of Transport and the Joint Return Task Force in Khartoum. The first barge, which departed from Kosti on April 24 with 713 returnees onboard, reached Adok, Upper Nile State (southern Sudan) on 2 May. On 1 May, a second barge, with 750 Upper Nile returnees, left Kosti for Wad Dakona, Kodok, Kak, Malot and Malakal in Upper Nile. FAR, an international NGO, assigned medical assistants and health educators to accompany the barge.

On 3 May, 2,107 returnees assembled at the train station near Jabal Aulia in Khartoum, for departure to Aweil. Due to the large volume of luggage, only 742 returnees departed, leaving many stranded at the railway station. The Ministry of Transport is making arrangements to bring more trains to the station to facilitate the return of the remaining returnees.

Security Concerns

Humanitarian actors in northern and southern Sudan remain concerned about the security of the route for returns through South Kordofan and are liaising with UNMIS and local authorities to ensure safe passage. Further transport of an estimated 2,200 returnees from Khartoum to Kosti is planned for 10 and 17 May. The Joint Task Force has reported that a Special Security Committee has been established to ensure security of the train en route to Aweil, with a special focus on the route between Muglad and Babanusa where military escorts will be provided. UNMIS will also be on alert regarding the train's passage through these areas.

Meanwhile, insecurity, particularly in Upper Nile and Unity States in southern Sudan, is affecting planned movements. In a follow-up to an incident the previous week where local authorities reportedly tried to prevent returnees arriving in Renk from staying there, the South Sudan Return and Reintegration Commission (SSRRC) in Upper Nile has reported that returnees are now free to relocate to any county within the state.

Spontaneous returns to southern Sudan continued over the reporting period, with approximately 1,906 people returning. The total number of returnees to southern Sudan since October 2010 now stands at 297,916 people.

Returnees overview (Statistical update for 4 May 2011)

According to information from IOM, ADRA, SSRRC, the Resident Coordinator's Support Office (RCSO) and WFP, the number of returnees in southern Sudan, Southern Kordofan and the Abyei area since October 2010 is as follows:

Southern Sudan	South Kordofan	Abyei Area
297,916	5,210	37,727

2. Southern Sudan

High concern continues for safety of humanitarian workers

Concerns remain over the safety and security of humanitarian workers following the death of a World Food Programme (WFP) staff member in Jonglei and the commandeering of six trucks contracted by humanitarian agencies in Lakes on 19 April. Of the two drivers previously reported as missing, one driver was located and brought to Bentiu on 3 May. The status of the other driver remains unconfirmed. As a result of the recent violations of humanitarian space and security of personnel, assets and facilities, several humanitarian agencies continue to limit activities and movements in Lakes, Unity and parts of Jonglei State. This temporary restriction of activities may affect some 235,000 people in Lakes and parts of Jonglei who are in need of food assistance, according to WFP.

Humanitarian assessments launched in Unity

In Unity State the situation continues to be fragile and unpredictable, following a period of intense fighting in mid-April between armed groups and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). While fighting ceased in many areas, reports were received of further clashes on 23-24 April in Tam and Pup payams in Mayom County. While insecurity continues to restrict access and information on the affected population, initial reports are beginning to reveal the impact of the conflict. Local authorities report that an estimated but unverified 4,500 households are displaced in Mayom County. Since 27 April, humanitarian actors have conducted several initial missions to affected areas in the county and were told that most of the affected population is displaced to Mayom town, Riak village and the surrounding areas of Wangkai, Wangbour and Bouth villages. Immediate needs identified include food, non-food items (NFIs) and water, sanitation and hygiene promotion. Additional inter-agency assessments to Mankien, Abiemnhom and Mayom towns were conducted on 3, 4 and 6 May respectively.

Humanitarian response for displaced persons in northern Jonglei and Upper Nile

The reports of two inter-agency missions to Mareng and Khorfulus in northern Jonglei on 13 and 21 April have been finalised. The visits were conducted to assess reports of the new arrival of additional displaced persons, due to continued fighting between renegade General George Athor and SPLA. So far, 2,075 displaced persons were verified in Khorfulus. The displaced are in need of food and NFIs, and also require protection, livelihoods and education support. Food assistance is still required for 2,746 persons displaced in Old Fangak (registered on 11 April), however, security constraints have caused delays in food distribution. Further investigation is required in Mareng to clarify the reports of newly displaced persons, as previous missions have not provided enough time on the ground to verify the numbers.

In response to reports of displacement caused by the fighting on 23 April between General Athor and SPLA in Kaldak in northern Jonglei, an inter-agency assessment was conducted in Doleib Payam in Upper Nile on 27 April. Some 785 IDPs were registered and another 1,916 people were reported displaced by the payam administrator, bringing the total number of IDPs in the area to approximately 2,700. They are in need of food, NFIs, WASH and health support. Humanitarian partners are planning the response to those needs.

Tensions remain high between communities in Pibor in Jonglei

Tensions continue between the Luo Nuer and Murle communities in Jonglei, particularly in the context of a large cattle raid by the Luo Nuer that took place on 18-20 April. As of 27 April, approximately 5,000 displaced persons had arrived in Pibor town because of the raid. Needs identified by the assessment team include emergency food, NFIs, health and WASH. On 26 April, InterSOS distributed 687 NFI kits and MSF provided food rations for four days to 3,435 people. Reports have been received recently that the displaced have begun to return to their villages.

3. Three Protocol areas

Abyei

Clashes between military elements in an area between Goli and Todach (approximately 17km north of Abyei town) took place on 1 May, with 14 armed men reported to have been killed. There is growing concern that military elements on both sides are re-supplying arms to their units, increasing the risk of further violence. There have been no reports of civilian displacement within Abyei town following the clashes. In light of such developments and the risk of widespread violence and subsequent civilian displacements, preparedness measures of humanitarian partners have been stepped up and contingency plans have been revisited.

In an effort to cater for the needs of people who had been displaced from Todach, Tajalei, Dukra, Makir, Kolom, Amiet and Noong villages following fighting in the area between SPLA police and Misseriya tribesmen in late February and early March, CRS and its partners will resume the distribution of UNHCR NFIs. There are unconfirmed reports that some Ngok Dinka residents who left Abyei town following those clashes continue to return to their homes.

Meanwhile, the Misseriya migration through Abyei remains stalled. With the end of the dry season approaching, it is unlikely that the migration will make any further progress southwards. Nomads from the eastern and western corridors continue to converge on the central corridor in search of water, leading to overcrowding and increasing competition over access to grazing and water.

The market in Abyei town market is gradually being re-supplied, however, some basic food items, including vegetables and rice, remain scarcely available as northern traders have yet to return. In addition, continuous road blockages and insecurity along the roads from the north to Abyei are delaying some recovery programmes and projects with the timely delivery of construction materials badly affected.

South Kordofan

State legislature and gubernatorial elections took place in South Kordofan on 2-4 May. The voting passed peacefully without major security incidents. The announcement of final results is scheduled for 8 May. The humanitarian community had suspended non-essential field work and some of the field staff have been withdrawn to Kadugli and Khartoum as a precautionary measure. Preparedness plans for any eventuality following the announcement of the elections have been made. Four safe havens have been established and stocked with food items and NFIs. The safe havens are designed to accommodate 5,000 civilians.

Blue Nile

WFP will be shifting its programmes in the State from general food distributions to Food For Recovery, Food For Training, school meals and other programmes in order to avoid creating dependency. The move is based on ongoing vulnerability analysis and takes into account whether the immediate, emergency effects of conflict, such as fighting, large-scale displacement, are present or not. WFP has reached over 130,000 beneficiaries in Blue Nile so far this year, with special attention to returnee areas such as Kurmuk. WFP retains significant contingency stocks (for about 100,000 people) and have all preparedness measures in place.

4. Darfur

High-level visit to Thabit in North Darfur

On 2 May, a joint delegation led by the Humanitarian Coordinator, Mr. Georg Charpentier, and the State Minister for Humanitarian Affairs, Dr. Mutrif Sideeq, visited North Darfur. The delegation met the Joint Special Representative of UNAMID, Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, representatives of the North Darfur State legislature, and later conducted a field trip to Thabit and Nyoro. In Thabit, the delegation met with representatives of some 3,000 IDPs who have returned home following recent clashes. North Darfur authorities pledged to allow humanitarian agencies access the area. Following the outbreak of fighting between the Government forces and armed movements in December 2010, no humanitarian organizations have had access to the area. A joint Government and inter-agency assessment mission to the area is scheduled for early next week.

Update on Operation Springbasket

The first mission within “Operation Springbasket” took place to Kutum and Ein Siro on 1 May, with the participation of UNICEF, WHO, WFP, UNHCR and OCHA on several UNAMID helicopters. The mission first went to Kutum, where some NGOs already have a presence, and then proceeded to Ein Siro, where there has been no presence of humanitarian organisations for a number of months. The mission provided an opportunity for these agencies to assess humanitarian needs in the areas visited, with a view to return to these areas to deliver assistance based on the assessments undertaken. The next mission scheduled to take place on 5 May to Tok Jau was postponed as the aircrafts to be involved did not get clearance from the authorities. Other missions are currently being planned to places such as Sarong, Malagat, Sortony, Kaguro and Golo. OCHA is liaising with UNAMID on the locations and scheduling of these and other planned missions.

Working Group on New Displacement Figures visit to Zamzam camp

On 2-3 May, a joint UN and Government mission from Khartoum visited Zamzam with a view to harmonising estimates of new IDP arrivals since fighting broke in Darfur in December 2010. The mission was briefed about capacity limitations faced by the Zamzam focal point for registration of new IDPs. Due to the large influx of new IDPs and limited staff, it was difficult to distinguish the new arrivals from people coming from the vicinity of the camp or from El Fasher town. IOM, WFP and the NGO AHA (African Humanitarian Action) reported that 36,753 IDPs have already been verified and are receiving food assistance. Verification of a further 23,000 people is ongoing.

Kalma camp

On 3 May, International Medical Corps (IMC) and Oxfam America were denied access at the government security check point on the road from Nyala to the Kalma Camp. Despite these restrictions of access, international NGOs are continuing to provide humanitarian services in the camp through their national staff residing in the camp. WHO is planning to carry out a measles vaccination campaign in Kalma camp on 14-19 May.

Returns

The Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) requested WFP, World Vision International and UNHCR to screen 457 returnees expected to return to Hashaba in West Darfur State. The mission was postponed as the returnees declined to be screened at the Nyala transit site and demanded 6-month food rations for all, irrespective of being in the possession of ration cards or not. Following cross-checking of the list of these returnees against the general food distribution database, WFP and WVI noted that out of the reported 117 households (457 individuals) only 2 households with 3 individuals were found with valid ration cards. Although WFP provides return packages to ration card holders only, in this specific case it will provide one-month rations to the returnees. The provision of additional assistance will depend on the outcome of further planned assessments.

The 457 IDPs returned to Hashaba village with assistance from the government and humanitarian agencies operating in West Darfur on 2 May. Some materials to construct shelters and latrines had been pre-positioned in Hashaba before their arrival and two water pumps had been set up by the Water, Environment and Sanitation (WES) authorities to ensure immediate access to drinking water. On 4 May, an inter-agency team from Zalingei delivered relief return packages to the returnees and assessed overall reintegration issues, including protection.

El-Hawara Charity Organization (ACO), a national NGO, reported that since March some 795 IDPs have returned from Kass IDP camps to Dibis village (north of Kass). ACO reported that priority needs of the returnees include food, NFIs, WASH and health.

Following a visit this week by the Humanitarian Coordinator and the State Minister for Humanitarian Affairs to Nyoro village in West Darfur, where up to 4,000 people have returned, some gaps in the response have been identified in the areas of health, water and food assistance. In terms of health, it may take some time before a mobile clinic provided by ISRA NGO becomes operational. A significant delay is expected before UNICEF is ready to provide the required support to the Primary Health Care clinic due to challenges in the procurement and delivery of medical kits. Regarding water and sanitation, there is delay in water supply, though bidding for drilling of four boreholes had already been issued by UNHCR. As for food assistance, WFP plans to support some of their agricultural activities with food. In the meantime, UNHCR is providing shelter materials for returnees and FAO has distributed seeds and tools to 300 households.

Update on Sudanese returning from Libya

According to UNHCR, 712 individuals have so far returned overland to North Darfur from Libya. UNHCR reported that the low number of returnees (compared to over 1 million reported Sudanese nationals in Libya) could be due to clashes between pro-Gaddafi and opposition forces around the Sudan-Libya border area of El Kufra. UNHCR is monitoring the situation in both Malha and Tina areas, main entry points for returnees from Libya heading to Darfur.

Country-wide, IOM reported that as of 2 May, 14,209 Sudanese migrant workers and their families fleeing the conflict in Libya have been assisted to return to Khartoum on 77 flights. A further 1,304 persons have returned from Libya on five government-organised flights. A small group of Sudanese nationals (exact numbers are unavailable) was among those rescued from Misrata, a Libyan port and a scene of intense fighting between Gaddafi forces and opposition, on 27 April to Benghazi by the IOM ship Red Star One.