

18th October 2019

Unprecedented flooding affects thousands of locals, refugees in South Sudan

JUBA, SOUTH SUDAN, 18th October 2019 – Unprecedented heavy flooding in South Sudan’s Maban County has affected nearly 200,000 people, including refugees and host population.

Situated in the Upper Nile State, the affected area is home to more than 150,000 refugees from Sudan.

South Sudan is on a gradual path to recovery from six years of civil war and now faces flooding that the region has not witnessed in recent decades.

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, working with its partners and the local authorities is rushing emergency support. People are seeking safety from the flood waters wherever they find dry land, mostly on small islands as unprecedented water levels have submerged vast areas.

The area, near Maban’s capital town of Bunj, is prone to flooding this time of year because of heavy seasonal rains. Excess water from the Ethiopian highlands, where rainfall is becoming more intense and irregular, is also carving its way through neighborhoods in broad, swift rivers.

The affected population is in dire need of humanitarian assistance.

“Refugees and South Sudanese locals fled their homes, carrying their belongings and seen gathering together on little islands of dry ground,” said Adan Ilmi, UNHCR’s Representative to South Sudan. “Flood waters have submerged, making access to the refugee camps difficult for humanitarians. Schools in the region also remain closed,” He added.

The floods have also impacted access to public services, including hospitals and damaged sanitation facilities—increasing health risks. We remain concerned that the flooding may increase the risks and spread of diseases. South Sudan was recently declared cholera free last year with the fears that the deadly disease could make a comeback.

“UNHCR and partners together with the government have already begun assessments in refugee camps in Maban and surrounding communities. Among main needs identified so far are emergency shelter, food, water and sanitation. Refugees and local communities urgently need international support as it faces one of the worst floodings within the last decades.” Mr. Ilmi emphasized.

As an immediate response, UNHCR has pre-positioned emergency shelter kits and material assistance to help more than 5,000 affected families/some 25,000 people to rebuild and repair damaged shelter, but more support is needed.

Currently, South Sudan hosts almost 300,000 refugees mainly from Sudan’s Blue Nile and South Kordofan. An additional nearly 1.5 million are internally displaced inside the country.

END

For further information, please contact:

Eujin Byun, Public Information/Communications Officer

Tel.: +211 922 405 683 | Email: byun@unhcr.org

Stay connected:

www.facebook.com/SouthSudanUNHCR

www.data2.unhcr.org/en/country/ssd