

Sudan Situation

UNHCR Emergency Response in South Sudan



UNHCR Transit Centre in Renk, close to the Joda border crossing where the majority of those fleeing violence in Sudan have crossed into South Sudan. Services at the border are very limited and priority is to facilitate onward movement away from the border. At the transit center, UNHCR is providing basic services, water, core-relief items, and food through World Food Programme/WFP.

Over 16,600 arrivals registered as of 28 April

Nearly 88% of current arrivals are South Sudanese refugees fleeing from Sudan returning to their homeland. The figures only capture those who approached UNHCR and partners for humanitarian assistance/registration and are likely to be significantly lower than total actual returns.

UNHCR is rapidly scaling up to assist people seeking safety in South Sudan following the outbreak of violence in Sudan. After two weeks of fighting, the conflict looks set to persist and trigger further displacement both within and outside the country. UNHCR is working closely with partners and governments to respond to the needs of the newly arrived while preparing a joint response plan.

Sudan hosts over 800,000 South Sudanese refugees, a quarter of whom are in Khartoum and caught up in the fighting. To date, the majority of new arrivals have been South Sudanese returnees and the majority have crossed via the Joda border crossing in Renk, Upper Nile state. UNHCR is extremely concerned about the humanitarian impact of a large unplanned influx of returnees on an already dire humanitarian situation in South Sudan. Most of those returning are expected to go back to parts of the country that are already extremely fragile as a result of conflict, climate change, and food insecurity. In addition, the northern states of South Sudan are dependent on Sudan for the provision of basic goods and food and in just two weeks there have been sharp increases in the prices of food and other basic goods.

Current Situation

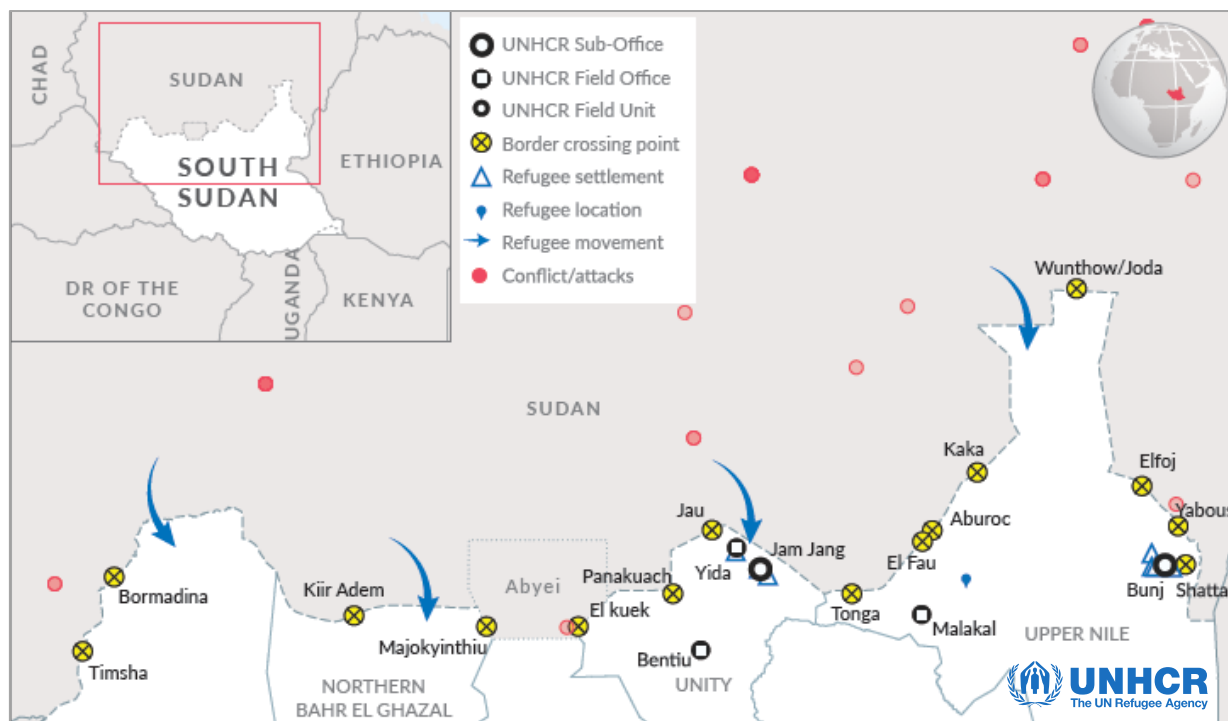
UNHCR and partners are planning for the estimated arrival of 180,000 returnees and 60,000 refugees. It is expected that the returnees will arrive first, mainly through Upper Nile state, as well as Western and Northern Bahr el Ghazal states. The pattern of refugee arrivals will be determined in large parts by the evolving nature of the conflicts, refugees are likely to arrive first from Khartoum and Darfur, with a possible outflow at a later point from the Kordofans and White Nile states of Sudan. Restrictions of movements inside Sudan are reported which may be preventing those fleeing from reaching the border.

UNHCR team deployed to Joda and Renk from the start of the crisis in Sudan. They observed that the first families to arrive were those with sufficient means to pay for transportation from Khartoum. However, since the start of the week, the UNHCR team has noted a greater percentage of vulnerable individuals arriving at the border. Arrivals in Renk are increasing daily and all signs concur that far greater numbers are

on their way, including reports received from UNHCR in Sudan's White Nile State that some 60,000 people, Sudanese and South Sudanese, have arrived from Khartoum, waiting to see how the conflict evolves to decide whether to return to the Sudanese capital or move to South Sudan. It is likely that those arriving on foot will be more vulnerable and have greater needs than the early arrivals.

In such a fluid context, numbers are extremely difficult to predict. However, the Government of South Sudan and humanitarian partners are planning for the return of an estimated 180,000 South Sudanese and the arrival of up to 60,000 refugees in the next three months.

It is expected that, at first, the returnees will arrive mainly through Upper Nile state, but this pattern could change depending on the dynamics of the conflict, which will also influence refugee arrivals, which are expected to be largely from South Kordofan, Darfur and Blue Nile states of Sudan.



Border-crossing points at Sudan – South Sudan Border

Main priorities

The main priority of the response is to **facilitate the onward movement of returnees and refugees** arriving to South Sudan's borders in order to avoid a build-up of people in border areas that are extremely remote, difficult of access and with very little infrastructure. National and State authorities are fully involved and have communicated to the humanitarian community their agreement that no returnee/refugee or IDP camps should be set up in border areas.

Emergency services, including emergency medical assistance, food, water and transit centres will be provided to all those arriving at the border. **Special attention** will be paid

to identifying vulnerable individuals, including separated children, victims of GBV, disabled and elderly individuals and others. In order to facilitate the onward movement of South Sudanese returning, some assistance will be provided to **the most vulnerable** who will find it difficult to travel to their relatives and communities.

Refugees will be identified and depending on their circumstances will be transported to suitable existing camps or be allowed to settle in communities and towns. UNHCR has noted that in addition to Sudanese asking for asylum, a number of Ethiopian, Eritrean and Somali refugees who had been living in Khartoum are also arriving.



A dire situation at the border Renk. Over 11,000 approached UNHCR and partner for assistance / registration since 15 April, while waves of families and individuals crossed the border on motor vehicles, donkey carts or on foot as pedestrians.

Joda Border Crossing, UNHCR Reception Centre, April 27, 2023.

Coordination Mechanisms

The South Sudanese government and the Humanitarian Country Team have agreed on the following coordination mechanisms:

The Commission for Refugee Affairs (CRA) and UNHCR will co-lead and coordinate the [refugee](#) response.

The Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) will lead the response for [returning South Sudanese](#) with the support of UNHCR and IOM.

IOM will coordinate the response for [third-country nationals](#).



Malual Mayom Deng and family fled South Sudan in 2016 during the Civil War. They have since that time been living as refugees in Khartoum. They have now once again had to flee, back to their native South Sudan. They are now going to try to make their way back to their area of origin, Northern Bahr El-Ghazal.

Joda Border Crossing, April 27, 2023.

Emergency Response

At the Border

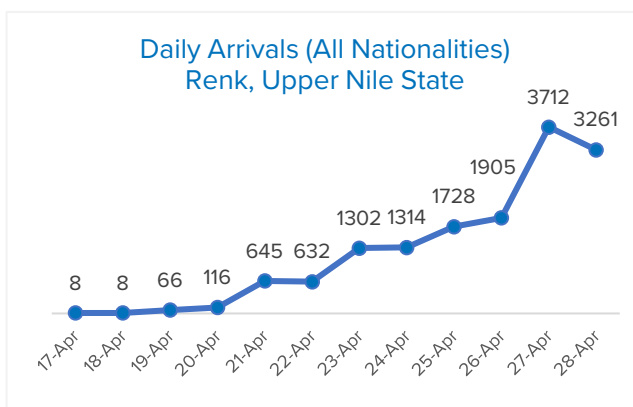
UNHCR has been registering new arrivals at several points along South Sudan’s border since 15 April 2023, together with IOM. The two organisations are rapidly scaling up to strengthen and harmonize data collection and analysis, including population data, including age, gender, nationality, place of origin, triage of status, triage of special needs and vulnerabilities.

In addition, UNHCR is setting up:

- Coordination of the response at field level
- Registration and identification of vulnerable
- Protection desks (info point)
- Construction and management of reception/transit centre
- While waiting for other partners to deploy, UNHCR has been providing food, water, sanitation, hygiene

services in Renk

- While waiting for other partners to deploy, UNHCR has been providing emergency medical assistant at the Joda Border Crossing Point
- With IOM, UNHCR is providing transportation to transit only for vulnerable returnees, all refugees and asylum seekers



Data Source: Joint border monitoring led by RRC, UNHCR and IOM



UNHCR bus is travelling between the Joda Border Crossing and the UNHCR Transit centre transporting the most vulnerable from the border. Services at the border are very limited and many have been stuck for days. At the transit center, UNHCR is providing water, core relief items, and tailored support to the most vulnerable.

At Transit Centers

Transit centers are set up to avail the following services:

- Reception
- Provision of life-saving services: Food (cash or hot meal), Emergency Health, Nutrition, WASH
- Protection services for people with special needs including counseling for refugees and asylum-seekers
- Site management
- Shelter: communal shelters (resting space planned for up to 72h)
- Triage: refugees/asylum seekers, returnees, TCN are separated
- Essential protection services: SGBV, Child protection, family reunification, telecommunications
- Core Relief Package: every family 2 sleeping mats, 2 blankets, 1 jerry can, 2 mosquito net, dignity kit per woman/girl (between 12- to 50-year-old), 1 soap, WASH non-food items

Onward movement

- Refugees: transportation provided to camps (UNHCR)
- Vulnerable Returnees (20%): cash for transport (UNHCR/IOM) to a point where they are able to proceed to their final destination.
- Third-Country Nationals (TCN): transportation or cash for transport or flight (IOM)



UNHCR water truck providing clean water to UNHCR Transit Centre, Renk, April 27, 2023



UNHCR has set up one transit center which has been operational in Renk, and the second one is underway. UNHCR Transit Centre, Renk, Upper Nile, April 27, 2023

Beyond emergency response:

While large scale arrivals of vulnerable, traumatized individuals to remote and under-developed border areas present a humanitarian challenge, perhaps the most difficult part of the response will be in the medium term, when large numbers of unplanned returns arrive in communities that are already struggling and depend on over-stretched humanitarian assistance.

Based on previous year's trends, it is estimated that the majority of returnees from Sudan will go back to communities in Unity, Upper Nile and Northern and Western Bahr el Ghazal States.

Those northern states, which are heavily reliant on imports from Sudan for survival, are expected to bear the brunt of the repercussions of the Sudan crisis: in just two weeks, prices of food and fuel throughout all northern states have increased by up to 60%.

Any large-scale return is likely to destabilize already fragile communities in those states. It is not possible for now to know which communities will be most affected. Some discussion will start as to what a basic support package for these communities might be.

In order to avoid an overlap with the country's Humanitarian Response Plan, the emergency response plan is for three months only and does not cover assistance to communities.



Rebecca sits with her little sister at UNHCR emergency transit center in Renk, April 27, 2023. Her family fled from Khartoum, travelling mostly on food, to reach the South Sudan border.