FLASH UPDATE

Influx from West & South Kordofan, Sudan, to South Sudan

5 December – 20 January

6,522
Total Arrivals

3,899
Refugee Arrivals

2,623
Returnee Arrivals

3
Transit/Reception Sites

402
Individuals currently hosted in Rotriak

2,641
Refugees relocated to refugee camps (cumulative)

Transit Centre in South Sudan reached peak capacity this week as families fleeing escalating conflict in Sudan's Kordofan region continued to arrive. © UNHCR/ Magak Arop

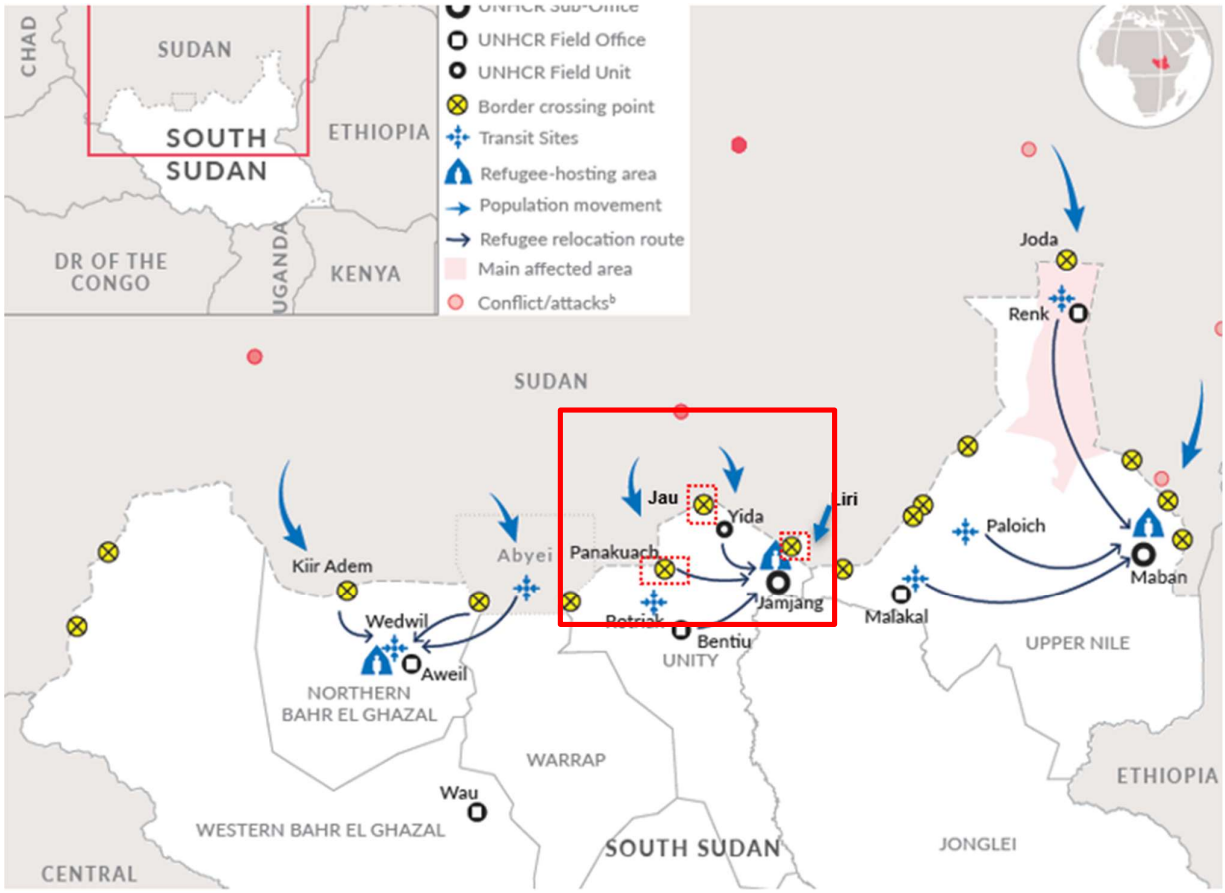
Background

- Since the outbreak of conflict in Sudan in April 2023, South Sudan has received approximately 1.3 million new arrivals. While the majority have entered through the Renk/Joda border and the eastern corridor in Upper Nile State, movements through northern Unity State and Ruweng Administrative Area—particularly via Panakuach, have historically been the second highest.
- Refugees arriving in Ruweng and Unity are transported from the border to UNHCR-supported transit and reception facilities before relocation to Ajoung Thok and Pamir refugee camps.

Situation Overview

- Since 5 December, UNHCR has observed an increase in arrivals from Sudan's Kordofan region, driven by intensified fighting and deteriorating security conditions. An estimated **6,522** individuals have crossed into South Sudan during this period.
- While the majority of arrivals originated from West Kordofan, recent weeks have seen a notable increase in arrivals from South Kordofan, particularly Kadugli and Tolodi. Most returnees are entering through Panakuach, while refugee arrivals are primarily crossing through the Jau and Liri entry points.

- The drivers of displacement remain unchanged and include ongoing insecurity and instability in Sudan, forced recruitment of youth, and severe shortages of food and basic services, including healthcare and education.
- New arrivals report facing significant insecurity and violence en route to the border, including widespread looting, armed robbery, and intimidation by armed groups. Many families were forced to divert from main routes to avoid hotspots, resulting in delays, heightened fear, and psychological distress. High transportation costs further compounded vulnerabilities: while some households were able to pay for transport from locations such as Kadugli to Jau, others were compelled to walk long distances due to lack of resources, leading to physical exhaustion and increased vulnerability upon arrival.



Population Movement Patterns

Arrival patterns from South and Western Kordofan have been observed as follows:

1. **Direct transit movements through South Sudan**: Between 5–7 December, approximately **2,000 individuals** crossed into South Sudan via Panakuach Border Point before continuing onward to re-enter Sudan through the Liri border point in South Kordofan, Sudan. Border monitors continue to observe such movements but are unable to verify precise numbers. These movements reflect a short-term evacuation dynamic, where South Sudan is used as a safe passage to other parts of Sudan. These movements have limited engagement with reception or protection services in South Sudan.

2. **Arrivals hosted at transit sites**: In parallel, of the **3,917 individuals** who arrived through Panakuach, the majority are returnees with some refugees who continued onward from the border to a UNHCR- and IOM-supported transit site in Rotriak/Lalop (an open site with no permanent shelter or services). The site is currently hosting **402** individuals and requires immediate short-term humanitarian assistance, while needs assessments are conducted and onward transportation arrangements are being organised. UNHCR has relocated **173** refugees from these sites thus far.

3. **Arrivals through Jau/ Liri Entry Points to Reception Centres**: Approximately **2,605 individuals** have arrived via the **Jau and Liri entry** points, representing predominantly refugee movements into South Sudan. These arrivals are presenting themselves mainly at Yida Reception Centre, which is currently hosting **656 individuals**, more than double its intended capacity.

Humanitarian Response

- The response to the influx in Unity State and the Ruweng Administrative Area follows the same phased approach applied under the broader Sudan response. UNHCR, in coordination with humanitarian partners and local authorities, is prioritising relocation from the transit and reception centres, with **2,641** refugees and asylum-seekers relocated to Ajuong Thok and Pamir Refugee Camp as of 16 January.
- UNHCR has also scaled-up border monitoring and registration capacity at reception centres, and expedited profiling, registration and provision of non-food items (NFIs) to support initial settlement.
- WFP is also supporting the response through the provision of hot meals at reception centres and the incorporation of new arrivals into general food distribution in the camps.
- In parallel, UNHCR is leading contingency planning efforts and coordinating with partners to assess available stocks and surge capacity. In light of reduced funding and partner capacity, the contingency trigger for the emergency response has been revised downwards from 350 to 150 arrivals per day through the Jau and Liri entry points. UNHCR continues to closely monitor arrival trends and operational capacity and will adjust accordingly.

Operational Outlook and Preparedness

- While arrivals from West Kordofan have slowed, those from South Kordofan are increasing. These movements remain fluid and difficult to predict. However, further movements are anticipated based on information shared by newly arrived refugees.
- UNHCR remains prepared to continue to receive arrivals at reception and transit facilities in Yida and Pamir which together have a combined capacity to host up to 800 individuals
- Nevertheless, staffing shortages linked to funding constraints continue to limit UNHCR's ability to rapidly surge operations particularly with regards to the onward movement of refugees from reception/transit centres to refugee camps.
- Strengthened border and movement monitoring will be maintained across Panakuach, Jau and Liri to inform planning and early warning.
- However, additional donor support is urgently required to reinforce border monitoring mechanisms, expand emergency response capacity, and ensure adequate staffing for registration, protection and transportation assistance, as the situation remains volatile and unpredictable.

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is grateful for the support in 2025 of:

Australia | Austria | Belgium | Canada | Denmark | European Union | Finland | France | Germany | Ireland | Italy | Japan | King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSRelief) | Luxembourg | Netherlands | Norway | Republic of Korea | Spain | Sweden | Switzerland | United Arab Emirates | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | United States of America | African Development Fund | Central Emergency Response Fund | Intergovernmental Authority on Development

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