



30 June 2012

# Refugees in Unity State

## FACT SHEET



### Statistics

Location	Total
Nyeel	844
Pariang	2,396
Yida	58,376
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>61,616</b>

### Background and operational context

- The humanitarian crisis that began a year ago and has worsened in recent weeks, with daily arrivals of large numbers of refugees fleeing conflict and related food shortages in South Kordofan, with over 1,000 new arrivals on certain days.
- With a population of close to 59,000, Yida is the largest refugee settlement in South Sudan.
- UNHCR and humanitarian partners face huge challenges in delivering protection and life-saving assistance. Seasonal rains have started making Yida a virtual island. As a result of torrential downpours, the Pariang-Yida road is closed for all traffic, and only passable after three dry days. The Bentiu-Mayom-Yida road is passable only for light vehicles.
- Yida's proximity to the disputed border area of Jau is problematic from a security standpoint. The border zone is the theatre of sporadic skirmishes. Moreover, Yida was bombed in November 2011 and is within shelling range.
- UNHCR advocates for the voluntary relocation of refugees to areas at a safer distance from the border, both for reasons of safety and in order to preserve the civilian character of the refugee settlement. The safety of children and, particularly of unaccompanied minors, is a high priority.



## UNHCR's role

- Co-ordination of responses to the refugees' needs, with regular consultations at both point of delivery and national levels.
- Protection monitoring, registration, dealing with child separation and the high incidence of unaccompanied minors are among the protection priorities. Identifying and addressing concerns of persons with specific needs including prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence are also key activities.
  - The principal cause for alarm is the proximity of refugees in Yida a volatile conflict zone. .
  - The imperative of providing education in a safe environment cannot be overstated. Well over half of the refugee children are under 18 years of age.
- Dialogue with refugees to relocate to safer areas away from the border. Refugees wish to remain close to their homeland, the Nuba Mountains. Moreover, they are not accustomed to living in flat lands and prefer the Yida landscape. This notwithstanding, the security of refugees is paramount.
- Provide basic life-sustaining assistance to all refugees, including protection, food, water-sanitation-hygiene, nutrition and health services. In Nyeel and Pariang, refugees also have access to expanded services in primary and secondary education along with support to engage in agriculture.
- Negotiate with the authorities to provide land for settlement and cultivation by means of promoting refugee self-reliance.

## Operational Challenges

- Sanitary and hygiene conditions in Yida have taken a radical turn for the worse, owing to the rapid growth of the population in the refugee settlement.
- Problems in addressing the situation are attributed to the lack of basic infrastructure and local technical capacity in the region. Transporting drilling equipment to Yida in rainy season conditions is very difficult.
- Security of refugees and humanitarian workers.
- Delivery of humanitarian aid during the rainy season.



## New Developments

- Currently there are 58,375 refugees in Yida , with a continuing arrival rate of between 500 and 1,000 per day. The population has more than doubled since the end of April, when there were 27,500.
- New arrivals increasingly show signs of malnutrition. Diarrhea has become the main cause of morbidity among refugees. Health actors are raising grave concerns about the risk of disease outbreak
- There is adequate groundwater in Yida. The main challenge is to scale up the numbers of latrines and boreholes to match the pace of arrival of refugees.

## Operational Responses

- Despite enduring concerns about refugee security due to Yida's proximity to a disputed border zone, UNHCR and partners continue to provide life-saving assistance and basic services in order to maintain conditions of dignity.
- UNHCR and partners have expedited procedures for processing new arrivals. The priority is to check their nutrition status and ensure that those who are malnourished receive urgent treatment.
- There is blanket supplementary feeding for all vulnerable groups (pregnant and lactating mothers, children under five years of age, etc.) including among the settled refugees. The rains are affective the pipeline; some fortified food products are stuck en route. Health partners have increased community visits and screening, resulting in a higher rate of detection and timely response.
- New partners are boosting the efforts of other actors the sectors of water, sanitation and hygiene. Priorities include drilling six new boreholes to complement the existing six, construction of 900 community latrines, and health and hygiene promotion campaigns and education on vector control and transmission to promote behavioural change.