

**UNHCR**United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

Update on Emergency Response Operations in South Sudan

Week Ending 10 March 2013

Highlights

- **UNHCR assisting new refugee arrivals in Upper Nile State**
- **Relations between host and refugee communities in Yida remain tense**
- **New arrivals to Yida decrease**

Upper Nile State

UNHCR assisting new refugee arrivals in Upper Nile State

The UN refugee agency together with its humanitarian partners is assisting nearly 900 refugees who began arriving in South Sudan's Upper Nile state last week.

Members of the group of 888 refugees said they had walked for five days from villages in Blue Nile State in Sudan in order to escape shelling and aerial bombardments. The refugees were brought to the Doro refugee camp in South Sudan's Maban County with 485 then being transferred to a transit center in Jamam ahead of relocation to a new refugee settlement which is being constructed. They were reported to be in reasonably good health. Another group of 54 refugees from Sudan who arrived earlier were also transferred to the center.

Some of the newly arrived said they had walked through the bush in order to avoid detection by what they described as Antonov aircraft that had been bombing the area. They said four people had died during the journey due to weakness and illness and indicated that other individuals weakened by journey had been left behind and may have died.

Some 175 children under five have been identified by UNHCR as have approximately 20 separated children.

One man, Abuzet Awad, told UNHCR staff that two of his children were killed when the village of Wadaga was bombed on February 25. Days later he joined other villagers in a flight to safety. "There was nothing more I could do for my daughters," he said. "I had to be a man and take care of the rest of my family."

UNHCR activated contingency plans for the arrival of refugees from Blue Nile State which includes providing them with sleeping mats, blankets, soap and a food rations.

"Once refugees cross the border, it is our responsibility to make sure that their suffering is alleviated and that they receive as much support as possible to cover their most basic needs," said Christian Baureder, acting head of UNHCR's field office in Bunj.

Unity State

Relations between host and refugee communities in Yida remain tense

Tensions between the host community in Yida and Nuban refugees have escalated in the past week following recent incidents of alleged cattle raiding. Two people have died in fighting which has taken place in Battoi, a village located approximately 10 km to the northeast of Yida.

The Government of South Sudan and National Police intervened promptly and are currently investigating the deaths. UNHCR continues to work with both host and refugee leaders to foster peaceful coexistence in Yida. Since the

establishment of Yida as refugee settlement, relations between the refugee community and the local Dinka population have been relatively peaceful until the occurrence of these recent events.

New arrivals to Yida decrease

During the past week, UNHCR registered some 830 new refugees in Yida, down slightly from the 940 new arrivals registered in the previous week. Registration trends in Yida have been decreasing for the past three weeks, down from an average of between 300-400 a day in January and February. While UNHCR cannot attribute a definite reason for the decline, there has been speculation that aerial bombardments in Southern Kordofan are preventing refugees from accessing safety in South Sudan. The marked increase in tensions between host and Nuban populations in Yida and surrounding areas could also be a contributing factor behind the lower number of new arrivals.

UNHCR is continuing site development work in the new refugee camp, Ajuong Thok, to be opened in late March. UNHCR remains concerned by the overpopulation in Yida which is the main rationale behind the establishment of new sites for refugees in Unity State.

Statistics

Upper Nile State: 114,371		Unity State: 71,551	
Yusuf Batil	37,686	Nyeel	913
Doro	45,318	Pariang	795
Jamam	15,638	Yida	69,843
Gendrassa	15,729		

Partners:

ACROSS; ACTED; CARE; Danish Refugee Council (DRC); Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO); GOAL; GIZ; IBIS; International Rescue Committee (IRC); International Organization for Migration (IOM); INTERSOS; MEDAIR; Non-Violence Peace Force (NVPF); Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC); OXFAM; Relief International; Samaritan's Purse; Save the Children Fund; UNICEF; World Food Programme (WFP); World Health Organization (WHO); World Relief; World Vision International.