

Regional Overview - Internally Displaced Persons

April-June 2023



Mary Nyeluok Liom lives in the Bentiu IDP Camp, Sotuh Sudan, and cares for her ten-year-old grandchild. © UNHCR/Andrew McConnell

OVERVIEW

As of 30 June, the East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes (EHAGL) region was hosting around 12.22 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in five countries – mainly in Burundi, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan. The drivers of displacement are complex, covering conflict, persecution as well as climatic and natural disaster factors.

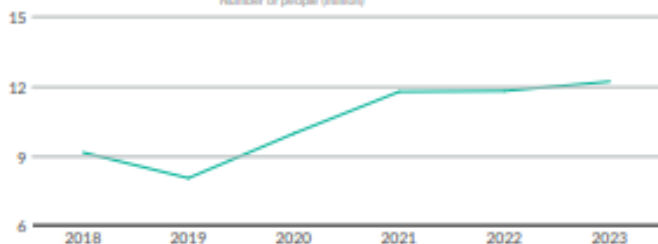
An increasing number of persons are internally displaced in the region due to climatic factors, notably the prolonged drought in Somalia. To this effect, UNHCR – as part of the Multi Partner Trust Fund Joint Programme on Addressing Drivers and Facilitating Safe and Orderly Migration in the Contexts of Disasters and Climate Change in the IGAD Region - commissioned a study on Human Mobility and Climate Change in the IGAD Region: a case study in the shared border regions of Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia. On 4 May, UNHCR facilitated and presented at the launch for this study.

There are several opportunities in the region for durable solutions for IDPs. In Burundi, the government has identified land to resettle the currently displaced population, although this land will need significant investment. In South Sudan, the ongoing “Pockets of Hope” initiative is proving effective in very challenging circumstances. In Somalia, there are ample opportunities for durable solutions that can be pursued in certain locations. UNHCR is part of a government-led durable solutions task force in Kismayo that aims to find durable solutions for 20,705 households (124,607 individuals) across 164 verified IDP sites.

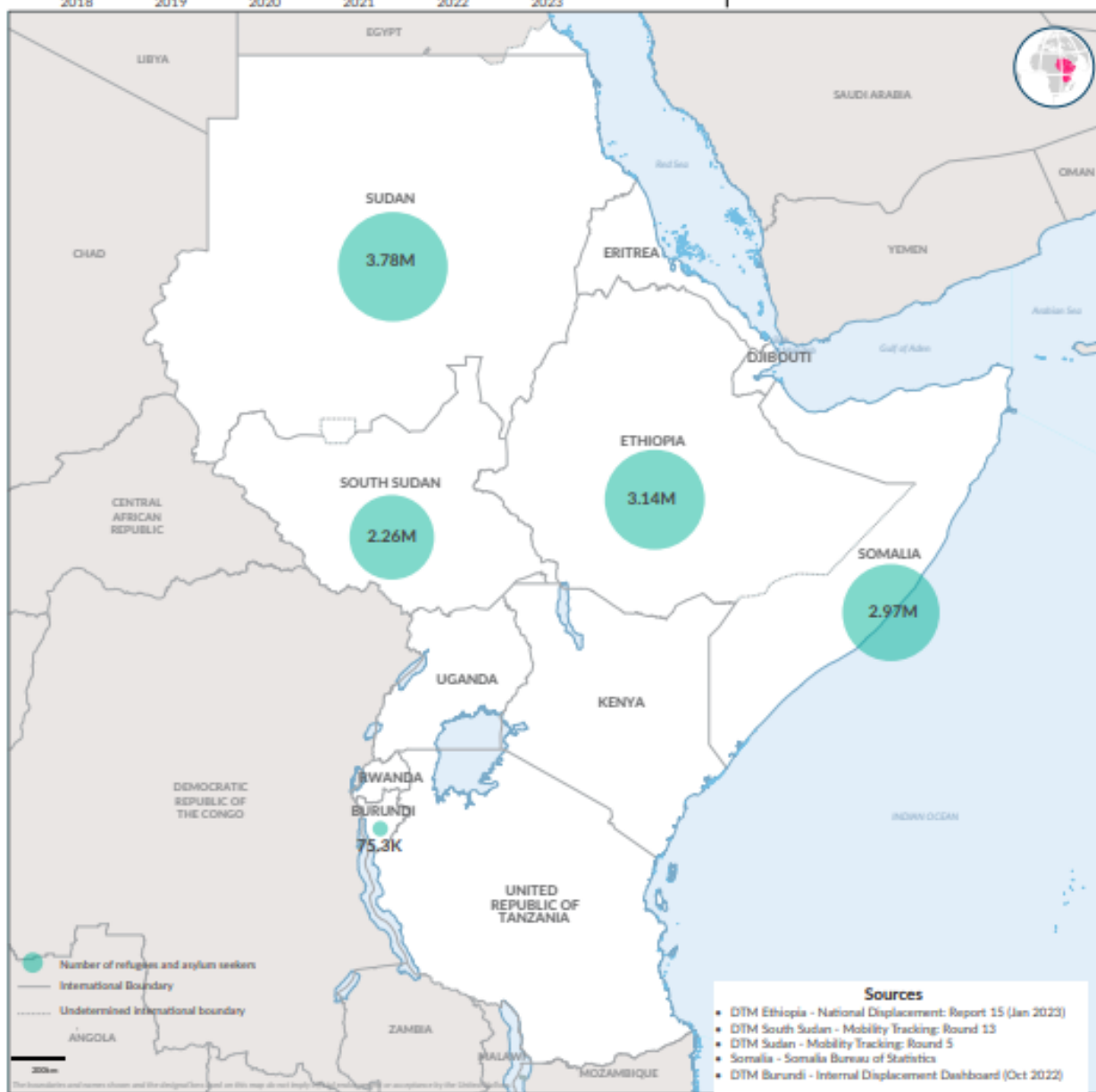
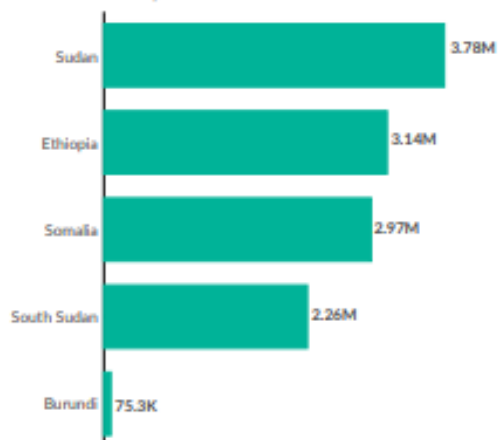
12.22M
Total IDPs in the EHAGL region

Annual Trend of Displacement

Number of people (million)



IDPs by host countries



COUNTRY UPDATES

BURUNDI

According to the IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (IOM DTM), as of May 2023, there were 76,987 IDPs in Burundi marking an increase of 1,687 from the first quarter. Of these, 68,810 were displaced due to natural disasters (an increase of 2,005 from the previous quarter) and 8,177 due to other reasons (a decrease of 318 from the previous quarter).

Following the serious flooding from the Rusizi river in Bujumbura which hosts two IDP sites, more than 1,000 households were displaced and 700 of these sought refuge in the IDP sites mostly in Kinyinya II. However, this site itself was subsequently flooded and although the flood waters receded, it continues to suffer some consequences, such as latrine unavailability. The same area faces a cholera outbreak.

Civil identity documents are key in facilitating access to assistance and services for IDPs. However, many lost their documents during displacement and have faced challenges in accessing services. The medical insurance card (*Carte d'Assurance Maladie – CAM*) was equally cited as necessary by IDPs, particularly the elderly and persons living with disability.

UNHCR response

UNHCR, through its partner Help A Child, distributed second-hand clothing and solar lamps to the affected population within the Kinyinya II area based on vulnerability criteria. Child Protection in Emergency interventions are ongoing in the Sobel IDP site as well as Rumonge province and are envisaged to continue until December 2023.

UNHCR together with the *Commission Nationale Independent de Droit de l'Homme (CNIDH)* conducted a campaign to register and issue IDPs with national identity cards. The vulnerable IDPs and members of their surrounding communities were also issued with medical insurance cards. The campaign was conducted jointly with the authorities. Six locations were targeted and four reached with 224 persons served with national identity cards while 270 households received medical insurance cards. The campaign could not be undertaken in the other two locations as the government suspended the issuance of Identity cards in the area. CNIDH continues to advocate with the government for the resumption of issuance in this area.

During the second quarter, several workshops were organized for the update, validation, and operationalization of various Child Protection strategies. Additionally, from 27-29 June, a training session was held for 60 representatives from 50 organizations who are part of the Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Sub Sector Group on the elaboration of GBV SOPs. The process to revise the existing SOPs was launched.

ETHIOPIA

As of 30 June, it was estimated that 3.14 million people were internally displaced across the country. Most of the internal displacement is due to localized conflicts, including inter-communal violence, instrumentalized and tied to the Northern crisis, notably in Benishangul Gumuz, Oromia and Somali regions.

IDPs in Tigray have been in a difficult situation since food aid was paused in May by WFP and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) due to food aid intended for IDPs and refugees being diverted and sold on the local market. The pause in food aid distribution is having a devastating effect on IDPs and host communities as the region struggles to recover from the two-year conflict. The majority of those affected have been begging as a coping strategy.

The return exercise for IDPs prepared to return to their areas of origin in Northern Ethiopia was carried out for a few months (beginning in March) but was halted due to lack of funding. The forcibly displaced had requested that humanitarian organizations such as UNHCR and government bodies such as the Bureau of Settlement and Repatriation (BoSAR) return them to their place of origin to engage in farming as the

rainy season had already begun. Additionally, IDPs are suffering from a lack of clothing, emergency shelter, and Non-food Items (NFIs) to deal with the cold and rainy season.

Following the severe recurring drought witnessed in the Somali region for five consecutive years, between March and April 2023 the Gu rains set in and further devastated the region. The heavy downpour and resultant floods worsened the dire situation of IDPs and their host communities, leading to the displacement of more individuals, and loss of lives, predisposing them to diseases, loss of livelihoods, and limiting humanitarian access/response to the displaced population. The IDPs previously sheltering in the open had to occupy nearby communal structures temporarily. Farmlands, stored harvests, roads, bridges, water sources, livestock, and other public infrastructure were all impacted by the flood. UNHCR and other humanitarian actors operating in the area halted some previously scheduled response efforts for the drought-affected population due to access and logistical challenges posed by the floods.

UNHCR response

Northern Ethiopia Response

UNHCR and its partner Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY), conducted a needs assessment on the institutional capacity of legal administrations of the government and the level of legal awareness of IDPs and refugees in Tigray. Based on the assessment, EECMY provided capacity-building training for 86 government officials from legal institutions in Mekelle, Maichew and Shire Area of Responsibility (AOR) on IDPs rights and access to justice. Furthermore, EECMY conducted awareness-raising sessions for 102 IDPs in Mekelle, Maichew and Shire on access to justice and other legal-related issues.

Somali Region Response

A quick assessment of the impact of flooding was carried out in the Somali region by the Disaster and Risk Management Bureau (DRMB) and its partners including UNHCR. Findings from the assessment revealed that 45,416 households were affected by the floods to varying degrees and 25,844 households were displaced across 31 woredas in the Somali region.

UNHCR and its partners conducted a profiling exercise of IDPs in the Afder, Liban, and Daawa zones of the south-eastern Somali area between February and May in a bid to understand the immediate, emergency requirements and safety threats for the IDPs, help prioritize their needs and tailor response based on engagement with the communities. The exercise covered 115 IDP sites hosting 65,509 households (377,903 displaced individuals). CBI feasibility analyzes were incorporated in the exercise to further enlighten UNHCR and other humanitarian partners on the type of intervention preferred or feasible for the IDPs.

Domesticating the Kampala Convention

The Kampala Convention was ratified by Ethiopia in 2020. UNHCR is a member of the drafting task force established under the Inter-Ministerial Task Force to support the domestication process of the Kampala Convention. The task force carried out three rounds of legislative drafting consultations in 2022 and prepared a 'Zero Draft'. The initial draft was followed by a field visit conducted in the Somali Regional State in March, where the drafting team met with IDPs, returnees, and regional authorities to gather relevant inputs and enhance the draft. The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and the Ministry of Peace (MoP) conducted an internal review of the initial draft in early 2023. The MoJ, leading the drafting process, then initiated the next step by conducting five consultations to gather inputs and enrich the draft with the support from UNHCR and IOM. From 23-27 June, the drafting team consolidated the inputs from the consultations, the draft is under final review and will be presented to the Council of Ministers for approval before being submitted for adoption by parliament.

SOMALIA

In May, UNHCR and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) announced in a joint press release that [over 1 million people have been internally displaced in Somalia in record time](#). According to the [UNHCR-led Protection and Return Monitoring Network \(PRMN\)](#), more than 1,346,000 individuals have been displaced

in Somalia since the start of 2023, including some 523,000 displacements reported between 1 April and 30 June, primarily associated with flooding (51%), drought (27%), and conflict/insecurity (19%). There were fewer internal displacements recorded by the UNHCR-led PRMN between April-June 2023 than between January-March (823,000). Compared with the number of displacements recorded between January-June 2022 (809,000), there has been a 66 per cent increase in the displacement rate in 2023.

With the Shabelle River bursting its banks, widespread flooding was reported in Beletweyne, Hiran region (Hirshabelle), and surrounding areas. Despite reports of localized flooding, additional rainfall is needed to recover from the ongoing drought. The security situation in the country also remained tense, with reports of armed conflict between Somali security forces and a non-state armed group (NSAG), along with attacks on civilians by the NSAG. Additionally, there was a political impasse and renewed hostilities in Las Caanood, Sool region (Somaliland), and new hostilities in Garowe, Nugal region (Puntland).

Although famine was averted in 2022 through a concerted scale-up of the humanitarian response, the humanitarian situation remains extremely alarming, with approximately 8.25 million people (50 per cent of Somalia's population) in need of humanitarian and protection assistance and over 3.2 million people displaced. The Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) has provided Somalia with \$18 million as part of its global 'famine prevention' allocation and in support of the 2023 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP). The 2023 HRP requires \$2.6 billion to respond to the needs of 7.6 million most vulnerable people in Somalia. However, only 30.5% has been received as of mid-year.

On 11 April, the UN Secretary-General (UNSG), Mr. Antonio Guterres [made a visit to Somalia](#). During the visit, the UNSG met with the President of Somalia as well as members of his cabinet and advisors. The UNSG visited internally displaced families during a trip to Baidoa, Bay region (South West State) and met separately with civil society organizations, heads of UN agencies, programmes and funds supporting Somalia. He highlighted the support of the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), which is mandated by the UN Security Council to assist Somali security forces in the fight against Al-Shabaab. The UNSG's previous visit to Somalia, in 2017, was during a large-scale humanitarian operation to prevent famine. His visit this year came as Somalia grapples with a devastating drought that resulted in the [death of 43,000 people in 2022 alone](#).



UN Secretary General, Mr. Antonio Guterres, is accompanied by staff from UNHCR and other agencies while visiting IDP sites in Baidoa, Bay region (South West State), Somalia. UNHCR.

UNHCR response

As part of the response to the increased displacement in Somalia, both due to the drought and the conflict in and around Las Caanood, an Emergency Officer was deployed on mission to support the development of the contingency plan in the emergency response.

Somalia is a selected Member State to pilot the UN Secretary-General's [Action Agenda for Solutions to Internal Displacement](#). UNHCR has been actively engaging the UN Solutions Steering Group at the heads-of-Agencies and technical levels. Somalia will seek to benefit from the establishment of a thematic window on Solutions to Internal Displacement within the Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund, which presents a joint opportunity for the Steering Group and FGS Ministry of Planning, Investment and Economic Development (MoPIED) to mobilize funding to respond to the negative effects of climate change that drive rural to urban displacement, provide sustainable and long-term solutions to urbanization by contributing to the integration of displacement-affected communities, reduce displacement-related vulnerabilities and promote human rights. This fund will complement ongoing humanitarian, development and peacebuilding (HDP) nexus activities currently being implemented.

Some of UNHCR's key achievements in durable solutions during the recent quarter include the commencement of the first phase of construction of 100 permanent shelters to contribute towards durable solutions for IDPs at the Girible-2 site in Bossaso, Bari region (Puntland). The construction approach is based on the owner-driven model, in which persons with and for whom UNHCR works actively participate in the construction process under the supervision of technical experts.

With the aim of building the technical capacity of local authorities and partners on durable solutions in Somaliland, UNHCR settlement planning experts located in Somalia, Uganda, and Geneva co-facilitated with partner ACTED a training on the principles of integrated settlement planning, spatial policy, and settlement profiling.

SOUTH SUDAN

As of 30 June, there were over 2.26 million IDPs in South Sudan, displaced by both conflict and climate related factors. In May and June, communal conflicts erupted in Tonj East and Tonj North, leading to the new displacement of over 7,000 people who now live in the host communities.

Over 636,000 refugee returnees have been reported since the signing of the revitalized peace agreement in October 2018 to date. UNHCR is increasingly working with area based approaches to solutions for IDPs and refugee returnees through the Pockets of Hope initiative.

Unity State

Leer County authorities closed the Temporary Protection Area (TPA) on 30 June. The TPA had been hosting IDPs displaced by the 2013 conflict and the recent floods in Leer and its surrounding area. Despite several appeals and advocacy by UNHCR and OCHA to the office of the Commissioner for an extension of the deadline, the government had already extended the eviction from October 2022 until the present. The IDPs have been relocated to a new area within Leer town, despite their objections.

Abyei region

Between January and June, the communal conflict between Dinka Ngok and Twic communities continuously intensified, resulting in new displacement of approximately 8,500 civilians in Twic County, which was already hosting 37,000 IDPs, increasing the total IDP population in Twic to 45,500 across 14 IDP sites. The same conflict also displaced an additional 9,000 civilians in Abyei, bringing the total number of displaced persons in Abyei to over 45,000 people.

UNHCR response

The Protection Cluster in South Sudan published [a brief on the protection situation in Gokjak, Jonglei state](#). The brief highlighted key protection concerns for thousands of IDPs stranded at this spontaneous site. It

listed several identified immediate protection concerns and issued recommendations to address them. Additionally, the cluster, in close cooperation with Mine Action, published an [advocacy note on Conflict and Food Insecurity in South Sudan](#). The note emphasized an increase in incidents of rights violations associated with the current food crisis intensifying in the country. Following advocacy by the cluster, UNHCR (with ECHO support) provided 50 tablets to a dozen implementing partners with the goal to increase geographical and frequency coverage of the Protection Monitoring System across the country.

In May, the Protection Monitoring Work Group (PROMO) published a snapshot [report](#) highlighting the impact of the Sudan Crisis influx on areas of return in South Sudan with the goal to inform stakeholders involved in the humanitarian response about protection-related findings, advocacy efforts, and essential messages presented by the Protection Cluster.

Under the Statelessness project, UNHCR's Bor field office issued 229 Nationality certificates to targeted forcibly displaced persons and asylum seekers in Akobo East (30) and Pochalla County (99) of Jonglei State. The documentation process was facilitated by UNHCR with the support of the Department of Nationality, Civil Registry, Passport, and Immigration (DCRPI). The project aims to assist those who cannot afford documentation due to financial constraints and accessibility, with the majority of beneficiaries being refugee returnees from Ethiopia who remain internally displaced in South Sudan. It also aims to address statelessness in the community.

UNHCR and its partner, Hope Restoration South Sudan (HRSS) constructed a protection desk in Rubkuay town, Mayiendit County, a Women and Girls friendly space in Thonyor, and a traditional court in Leer town.

Since March, countrywide consultations have been conducted on the permanent constitution making and election process inside South Sudan. Through actively involving IDPs, returnees, and refugees, the consultations aim to overcome barriers that hinder their participation, address their specific needs, and promote a sense of belonging. Between April and June 2023, consultations were conducted in Mangalla, Yei, Yambio, Torit, Magwi, Wau, Juba and Raj, reaching 100 displaced persons in each location.

UNHCR led the establishment of Protection Working Groups in Twic County and Abyei to better coordinate protection activities and improve advocacy for durable solutions and responses to protection and humanitarian needs of the affected population. The Protection cluster conducted two assessments in Abyei and Twic and provided guidance to other clusters, successfully advocating for humanitarian responses to the affected population. The newly displaced persons mentioned above were assisted with food, WASH, health, and nutrition services.

From 3-6 April, UNHCR participated in the peace conference between the warring parties Dinka Twic and Ngok in Wau, organized by civil society with support from humanitarian partners. The conference ended with the two parties declining to sign the final communique due to disagreements on the creation of a buffer zone. However, they agreed to a ceasefire and allowed humanitarian and civilian free access and movement of goods, which is still holding.

SUDAN

Clashes between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF) erupted on 15 April. The Sudanese Ministry of Health stated that as of 17 June, about 3,000 people had been killed and 6,000 injured due to the conflict. Actual figures are most likely higher. However, telecommunications challenges and ongoing violence inhibit reporting and verification of information. Since the fighting started, at least 13 humanitarian workers have been killed and at least three injured. In addition, according to WHO, eight health workers have been killed and 18 injured.

According to the IOM DTM, as of 28 June, approximately 2,231,523 individuals (447,031 households) had been displaced internally as a result of the conflict. IDPs are now located in each of Sudan's 18 states. The highest proportions of IDPs have been observed in River Nile (16.36%), Northern (15.81%), White Nile (11.36%), and West Darfur (11.12%) states. IDPs have been originally displaced from eight states, including Khartoum, West Darfur, South Darfur, North Darfur, Central Darfur, North Kordofan, South

Kordofan, and Aj Jazirah. Prior to the conflict, Sudan already hosted 3.1m IDPs. The current overall figure is difficult to determine as we assume that many existing IDPs will themselves have been displaced, particularly those in West Darfur.

In North Darfur, an estimated 150,309 individuals are displaced. On 16 and 19 June, Tawila town came under attack by RSF and armed militias who now control the town. There are reportedly several dozen dead and more injuries. Many thousands have fled the violence in Kutum and Tawila (approximately 40,000 and 50,000 respectively, according to IOM Emergency Event Tracking).

In West Darfur, reports indicate that those internally displaced reportedly remained in a dire situation with limited humanitarian aid starting to reach the town. UNHCR and the Government of Chad estimate 159,060 new Sudanese refugees are seeking asylum in Chad. The IOM DTM estimates the number of internally displaced individuals in El Geneina locality at 301,055.

In Khartoum, according to DTM information, of the estimated 1,435,238 people displaced from the state due to the ongoing fighting and persistent shortages of water and electricity, approximately 23,615 are IDPs who have sought refuge in other locations across Khartoum state while 1,411,623 have fled to other states across Sudan.

In Northern State, an estimated 348,355 IDPs, all reportedly displaced from Khartoum, are currently sheltering across in Ad Dabbah, Al Burgaig, Al Golid, Delgo, Dongola, Halfa, and Merowe localities. The IDP population in Northern State reportedly increased substantially following recent heavy fighting in Jebel Awlia and Sharg El Nile localities. The requirement that all those seeking entry to Egypt now obtain a visa continues to impede movement through the Argeen and Halfa border crossings.

In River Nile, an estimated 305,246 IDPs, all from Khartoum, are reportedly seeking shelter with relatives or in rented accommodation across across Abu Hamad, Ad Damar, Al Buhaira, Al Matama, Atbara, Barbar, and Shendi localities.

In White Nile, 252,201 IDPs are reportedly sheltering with their relatives, in camp-like settings, rented accommodation and in public buildings across Ad Diwaim, Aj Jabalain, Al Gitaina, As Salam/Ar Rawat, Guli, Kosti, Rabak, Tendalti, and Um Rimta localities. IOM DTM notes that over 30% of the caseload are non-Sudanese nationals.

In Sennar, an estimated 146,655 people displaced from Khartoum are sheltering with host families and in rented accommodation across Abu Hujar, Ad Dali, Ad Dinder, As Suki, Sennar, Sharg Sennar, and Sinja localities.

In South Darfur, an estimated 136,135 individuals are displaced from other areas within South Darfur. Heavy clashes between SAF and RSF were renewed on 24 June, in the northern and central parts of Nyala town. IDPs are reported to be sheltering across Al Wihda, As Salam, As Sunta, Beliel, Buram, Kas, Mershing, Nyala Janoub, Rehaid Albirdi, and Sharg Aj Jabal localities.

In Al Jazirah, IOM DTM field teams report 126,240 IDPs sheltering with relatives in the host community, in rented accommodation and public buildings like schools and mosques across Al Hasahisa, Al Kamlin, Al Manaqil, Al Qurashi, Janub Aj Jazirah, Medani Al Kubra, Sharg Aj Jazirah, and Um Algura localities.

In Central Darfur, an estimated 118,180 individuals are displaced predominately from other areas within the state, with smaller groups displaced from South and North Darfur. IDPs are predominately sheltering with relatives, across Gharb Jabal Marrah, Shamal Jabal Marrah, Um Dukhun, Wadi Saleh, and Zalingi localities. Heavy fighting between SAF and RSF resumed in Zalengei town on 27 June, reportedly followed by widespread looting.



Qubas Abderahman, 28, is a Sudanese electrical engineer who was living and working in Khartoum. She had to flee her home as her neighbourhood was impacted by the fighting and was not safe anymore. She took a bus to Port Sudan in search of safety. UNHCR.

UNHCR response

The conflict has had a severe impact on humanitarian access, particularly in those parts of the country where UNHCR previously had a significant operational IDP footprint, such as the Darfurs. Many partners have suspended operations. Remote protection monitoring is ongoing, and hybrid means of coordination have been established, with a combination of in-person and remote coordination meetings with international staff remotely supporting national colleagues who remain on the ground and in contact with community-based networks and other key informants.

Despite the challenges, UNHCR as sector lead has continued to provide protection information and analysis, in particular on the situation in Darfur, based on the protection monitoring activities still ongoing. Where there remains operational space, such as in El Fasher, East Darfur and parts of Central Darfur community-based protection activities are ongoing, now geared toward those affected by the conflict. With the risk of looting and emerging needs in other sectors, UNHCR has quickly redirected support to health centres in North Darfur, distributing NFIs and other assets including generators. Cross-border operations into Darfur from Chad are being explored, although all is subject to securing the necessary access and Government permissions. The conflict has highlighted the importance of the localisation agenda, given most international partners have withdrawn from conflict-affected areas.

In other parts of Sudan now hosting – for the first time – IDPs, UNHCR is gradually scaling up its response in coordination with partners, including in the context of the mixed movements as many refugees (from Khartoum and elsewhere) are also seeking safety in other parts of the country. New hubs are being established in Wad Madani and Wadi Halfa, and protection response activities are also being scaled-up in Port Sudan, tailored to the needs of the population. For example, in Port Sudan, legal awareness sessions are being run focusing on access to civil documentation, the lack of which creates protection risks including risks of trafficking. Coordination structures have been established, in some places coinciding with the Refugee Working Groups (RWGs) to minimize the number of meetings being held.

During the crisis, UNHCR and partners have observed increased stigma about accessing mental health services among affected persons. As such, a small number of people have approached service providers and UNHCR is working with partners on sensitization material to increase willingness to seek mental health

support. UNHCR continues to co-chair a technical working group on mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) along with WHO. The group supports mainstreaming of MHPSS in ongoing emergency programming (health, education, child protection and GBV).

To support field coordination and service delivery, sub-national coordination was set up in States where IDPs are seeking safety in the North and in the East such as in Wadi Halfa, Gedaref, Kassala, Madani, and White Nile. An on-line walk-through on IDP coordination mechanism was organized for field colleagues to familiarize on the protection coordination role while ongoing coaching is being provided to the new coordinators by the national coordination team. Through these structures, coordination of the response including undertaking of needs assessments, mapping new IDP hosting sites, etc is ongoing.

The Protection Sector focused on advocacy around protection of civilians and centrality of protection, developing a new product "At a Glance: Protection Impact from the Conflict". This is a document reporting on the severity of the protection impacts on the civilian population as a result of ongoing conflict in SAF and RSF. So far, 8 flash updates and 6 advocacy notes have been produced. These documents have fed into advocacy efforts at the global level, supported by the Global Protection Cluster and bilateral advocacy initiatives with specific donors and stakeholders. This includes key messages developed to inform States attending the High-Level Donor Pledging event on Sudan.

Protection Sector in consultation with protection partners, strategic advisory groups, and other key stakeholders drafted key advocacy messages raising concerns on the protection of civilians. The key messages were tabled to Humanitarian Country Team on 13 June. The Protection Sector is also actively contributing to the Access Working Groups workstreams building on the knowledge, information and experience of the sector's partners.

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