

SOUTH SUDAN: SUMMARY OF LEARNING FROM RECENT RESEARCH

Significant efforts have been made in recent years to expand the amount of high-quality and policy-relevant socioeconomic data and research on forced displacement. In South Sudan, UNHCR has recently concluded the first [Forced Displacement Survey](#) (forthcoming), a comprehensive multi-topic survey on the socio-economic and living conditions of refugees, asylum-seekers and host communities, designed to produce high-quality, timely and comparable data on people forced to flee. [Building the Evidence on Forced Displacement](#), a research partnership between the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the World Bank, has also contributed global and country-specific studies on relevant topics, while the [World Bank-UNHCR Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement](#) publishes a regular literature review that summarizes recent publications and academic scholarship on issues related to forced displacement and is accompanied by a searchable database with key words, author, year and country.

Findings from recent relevant research from **South Sudan** are highlighted below.

For South Sudanese refugees, freedom of movement results in a win-win situation, empowering them to look for livelihood activities and contribute to local markets and communities.

<p>Deconstructing borders: Mobility strategies of South Sudanese refugees in northern Uganda</p> <p>Vancluysen, S. Global Networks (2021)</p>	<p>Overview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Uganda currently hosts more than 880,000 South Sudanese refugees. ➤ Refugees are permitted to work and move freely, but given that settlement registration is a prerequisite for support, most South Sudanese remain in the rural settlements. ➤ This paper explores the mobility of South Sudanese refugees in northern Uganda, based on fieldwork undertaken by the author in the Adjumani district, which hosts more than 200,000 refugees. <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The decision to flee South Sudan is multifaceted and depends on multiple factors including employment; education; whether a person has children; the location of family members; personal preferences and previous experiences of displacement. ➤ South Sudanese refugees in Uganda engage in two different forms of mobility: (1) many refugees are attracted by the living conditions and socio-economic opportunities available in towns near the refugee settlements, but commute to the settlements at least once a month to maintain their registration and collect assistance on distribution days; and (2) there is a high degree of cross-border mobility between the northern Ugandan settlements and South Sudan, driven by diverse push and pull factors (e.g. better education, employment, marriage opportunities), for short visits to maintain social relationships as well as extended stays. ➤ There is often a gendered pattern in the division of tasks, with men returning to South Sudan to look for employment and women settling in Uganda to take care of children or elderly family members.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The author argues that for South Sudanese refugees, mobility and crossing borders can be empowering, as they are able to engage in forms of mobility that are life-sustaining, including education, work, diversifying livelihood activities and continuing social customs.
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While voluntary returns have steadily increased following the signing of the revitalised peace agreement in 2018, those who choose to return need support.

<p>“Tired of Running” Repeated Displacement and Premature Returns in South Sudan</p> <p>Sydney, C.</p> <p>IDMC’s ‘Invisible Majority’ thematic series, November 2019</p>	<p>Overview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The paper examines the relationship between internal displacement, cross-border movements and durable solutions in South Sudan, including drivers of displacement and onward movements within and across borders; IDPs’ and refugees’ priorities/preconditions for voluntary return, and obstacles and opportunities faced to achieve durable solutions. ➤ The analysis is based on more than 200 interviews with IDPs, returning IDPs and returning refugees in and around Bentiu and Juba in July 2019 (data is not representative). <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Repeated displacements are very common, as over 75 per cent of those surveyed had been displaced more than once. Refugees have often been first internally displaced, with more than 80 per cent of returnee returnees stating that they had previously been IDPs before they left the country. ➤ Not all refugee returns have been voluntary, particularly among refugees returning from Sudan. Some returning refugees said the security forces had forced them to leave or they had been threatened with arrest and deportation. Among refugees who returned voluntarily, improved security in South Sudan was the main motivation, followed by reunification with family and friends. Poor living conditions in displacement were an important secondary motivation. ➤ The majority (around 85 per cent) of returning refugees live in IDP-like situations. Destruction of property is a major barrier to durable solutions for both IDPs and returning refugees. More than 80 per cent of the IDPs surveyed had property before their displacement, but 70 per cent of these said it had since been destroyed. ➤ 80 per cent of the IDPs surveyed want to return to their area of origin but are reluctant to do so due to pervasive mistrust, food insecurity, lack of livelihood opportunities, and lack of services.
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IDPs in South Sudan have lower standards of living and are more aid-dependent than rural and urban residents. Durable solutions are only achievable when the security conditions in the country improve.

<p>Informing Durable Solutions for Internal Displacement in Nigeria</p>	<p>Overview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Crisis Recovery Survey (CRS) was conducted in 2017 in four of the largest Protection of Civilian (PoC) sites, all in urban areas
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[Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan](#)

Utz Johann Pape, Ambika Sharma, Taies Nezam, Benjamin Petrini, Menaal Fatima Ebrahim, Jacob Udo-Udo, Felix Konstantin Appler, Andrea Fitri Woodhouse, Verena Phipps-Ebeler; Alexander Benjamin Meckelburg, Syedah Aroob Iqbal

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(Bentiu PoC in Upper Nile, Bor PoC in Jonglei, Juba PoC in Central Equatoria, and Wau PoC in Western Bahr-el-Ghazal).

- **The fourth wave of the High-Frequency Survey (HFS) South Sudan 2017 allows for comparisons of IDPs to rural and urban residents** and represents urban areas in 7 of the 10 pre-war states of South Sudan. To note, HFS 2017 does not cover two of the pre-war states (Jonglei and Unity).

Findings

- **IDPs have two typology profiles.** Before displacement, Group 1 households (40 per cent) were more likely to derive their income from wages and businesses. Group 2 households (60 per cent) were more likely to have agricultural livelihoods and worse housing quality. Group 2 households tend to be larger, poorer, more aid-dependent, and with higher dependency ratios. However, Group 1 households are more optimistic about their future. Group 1 households are primarily located in Juba and Bor PoCs, while Group 2 households are concentrated in Bentiu and Wau PoCs.
- **Poverty is widespread among IDPs and rural residents, but IDPs have deeper poverty gaps.** More than 90 per cent of IDP households are poor, compared to 86 per cent of rural residents and 75 per cent of urban residents. However, despite being poorer, IDPs are less hungry than urban residents. The lower hunger rates among IDPs may be due to more predictable and stable access to food due to aid.
- **IDPs have experienced a drastic deterioration in living standards**—their current living conditions are significantly worse than those of urban residents. Severe overcrowding in tents/temporary shelters and sanitation facilities reduces living standards, contributes to the spread of diseases, and increases the risk of GBV.
- **IDPs have better educational outcomes than rural residents but worse than urban residents, and men are more likely to be literate.** Women are much less likely than men to be literate in all three groups.
- **Sex-based disparities in the working-age population are starker for IDPs.** Young women have higher labour force participation and lower educational enrollment than young men. Among displaced adults, labour force participation trends are reversed; men are more likely to be active in the labour force while women are more likely to be idle. Displaced youth are more likely to be idle.
- **IDPs have lost most of their income-generating assets and depend on aid.** More than 75 per cent of IDP households rely on aid as their main source of livelihood.
- The authors highlight several priorities for durable solutions for IDPs in South Sudan, including **preserving human capital by strengthening food security, improving living conditions, and improving access to health care, education and employment opportunities.** However, any solution will depend on the improvement of security conditions in the country.

The peacekeeping mission in South Sudan may act as a pull factor by attracting conflict-affected people to areas with better security and opportunities.

[UN Peacekeeping and Forced Displacement in South Sudan](#)

Sundberg, R.
International
Peacekeeping, Volume
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Overview

- Previous sub-national research has shown that the presence and size of armed peacekeepers reduces the number of civilian and battle-related deaths, however **little is known about the effects of peacekeeping deployments on forced displacement.**
- This paper explores **whether UN peacekeeping deployments reduce the number of people forcibly displaced by violence in South Sudan.** The author argues that the deployment of peacekeepers may affect both push and pull factors for forced displacement: a peacekeeping presence may decrease actual levels of violence as well as the perceived threat of violence, but they may act as a pull factor by attracting conflict-affected people to areas with better security and opportunities.

Findings

- The paper presents two main results: (1) there is **no robust evidence that peacekeeping reduces the occurrence or magnitude of forced displacement;** and (2) **peacekeepers might instead act as pull factors,** as those displaced tend to seek shelter in protected sites around peacekeeping bases.