



New arrivals from Sudan entering South Sudan through Joda border crossing. UNHCR/Silva Alkebeh

Sudan Situation - Surge in Arrivals to South Sudan

10 December 2024

40,000+

estimated new arrivals to South Sudan in the last week¹

875,000

new arrivals to South Sudan since April 2023

400,000

South Sudanese refugees in White Nile State, Sudan

¹ Includes a mix of Sudanese refugees and South Sudanese returnees.

Highlights

- With fresh conflict erupting in the White Nile State of Sudan, South Sudan has received a surge in new arrivals in the last week, with some 20,000 Sudanese refugees arriving from villages in border areas. Since Saturday, there have been an additional estimated 7,000 – 10,000 new arrivals each day, with larger numbers of South Sudanese refugees leaving the camps where they have been residing in Sudan and returning to South Sudan. It is difficult to establish the figures as many arrivals in the past week have been through informal border crossing points in addition to the Joda border; all numbers are estimates at this time.
- Due to the deteriorating security situation in Al Jabalain locality in White Nile State and fighting in Joda border areas, humanitarian partners in South Sudan had paused operations over the weekend at the Joda reception centre. Amidst a fluid and volatile situation, UNHCR and partners resumed activities on 10 December with strengthened security measures, following a mission to the border on 9 December by UNDSS and UNHCR to assess conditions.
- The team found the situation at the border to be relatively calm, but with thousands of people walking along the 40 km road between the border and the town of Renk. Families had also stopped by the side of the road with some receiving food and water from local communities.
- White Nile State in Sudan hosts over 400,000 South Sudanese refugees in 10 refugee camps and more than 650,000 internally displaced Sudanese who have fled conflict in other parts of the country.
- South Sudanese refugee community leaders in Sudan report population movements have taken place both within Sudan (movements from the 2 most affected camps to the 7 camps on the other side of the Nile that remain unaffected) and towards South Sudan, following the presence of armed actors in and around refugee camps in White Nile State. Some refugees have reportedly relocated to areas close to the South Sudan border, with the intent of monitoring the situation and potentially returning when conditions stabilize.
- IDPs in Sudan have been moving from gathering sites in Al Jabalain locality to Rabak and Kosti towns, and further afield to Sennar and South Kordofan States.
- Some of the movement inside Sudan is considered to be preventive in nature, based on a fear of further incursions, possible aerial bombardments or shelling, or escalation of open conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF).
- In Sudan, temporary restrictions on staff movements are in place in White Nile State. Reduction of UNHCR's operational footprint is under consideration.

Humanitarian response

Sudan

In Sudan, the following actions have been undertaken:

- Regular communication with refugees through refugee leadership and various community structures.

- Communication with armed actors on the need to respect the civilian nature of refugee camps and safeguard humanitarian assets and supplies.
- Discussion on the modalities for the upcoming food distribution in refugee camps is ongoing.
- UNHCR, in coordination with the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC), OCHA, and partners, is closely monitoring the situation and initiating a rapid needs assessment for newly displaced families. The assessment and on-site visits to the identified locations are expected to begin by 11 December, provided security conditions permit.

South Sudan

In South Sudan, the following actions are being undertaken (some contingent on additional funding):

- Reinforcement of security measures for missions to the border areas, including informal border crossings. While the activities at the Joda border resumed in the morning of 10 December, UNHCR is working with IOM and partners to get better estimates of the new arrivals, resumption of border monitoring and multi-sectoral assistance at the Joda reception centre, which includes cholera screening, vaccinations, vulnerability assessments, provision of water, sanitation and health.
- Provide life-saving assistance to people on the move along the Joda road, primarily providing clean water and potentially other sanitation and hygiene services.
- Efforts to establish the numbers and locations of new arrivals, especially from the informal border crossings, through a mix of headcounts and subsequent mobile registration and setting up presence at unofficial border crossing points together with key partners.
- Working with IOM and other partners to scale up relocations out of the town of Renk, close to the Joda border. More than 700,000 people have transited through Renk since the start of the crisis, and it is estimated that between 50,000 and 80,000 have stayed in Renk, tripling the town's population. Rapid evacuation out of Renk is needed to avoid putting further pressure on basic services. Evacuation can only be done by river, a 48-hour trip on barges to the provincial capital of Malakal.
- Expansion of the transit centre in Renk is urgently needed as more than 17,000 refugees and returnees are already there, for an existing capacity of 10,000. New arrivals stay at the transit centre for a few days while awaiting riverine transportation out of Renk. However, many remain stuck as they have nowhere to go.
- Expansion of the capacity in existing refugee camps is also urgently needed, as the surge in new arrivals is expected to continue.

Financial Information

UNHCR is grateful for the critical support of donors in delivering life-saving humanitarian assistance, through direct contributions and the provision of flexible funding.

As of 10 December, the total reported funding for the 2024 Sudan Regional Refugee Response Plan had reached some USD 449.19 million, representing 30 per cent of the required amount of USD 1.3 billion. The South Sudan RRP requirements of USD 373 million are only funded at 24 per cent.

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