

Sudan Situation: Surge in Arrivals to South Sudan



Partners are scaling up onward transport from Renk as the new arrivals overwhelm Joda border and other informal border crossings / © Funmi Osibona UNHCR



80,000+

estimated **new arrivals into Renk** since surge



8

New arrival locations identified.



6

Entry points, **five** of which are unofficial.



82,516

individuals **recorded** (headcounts)



35

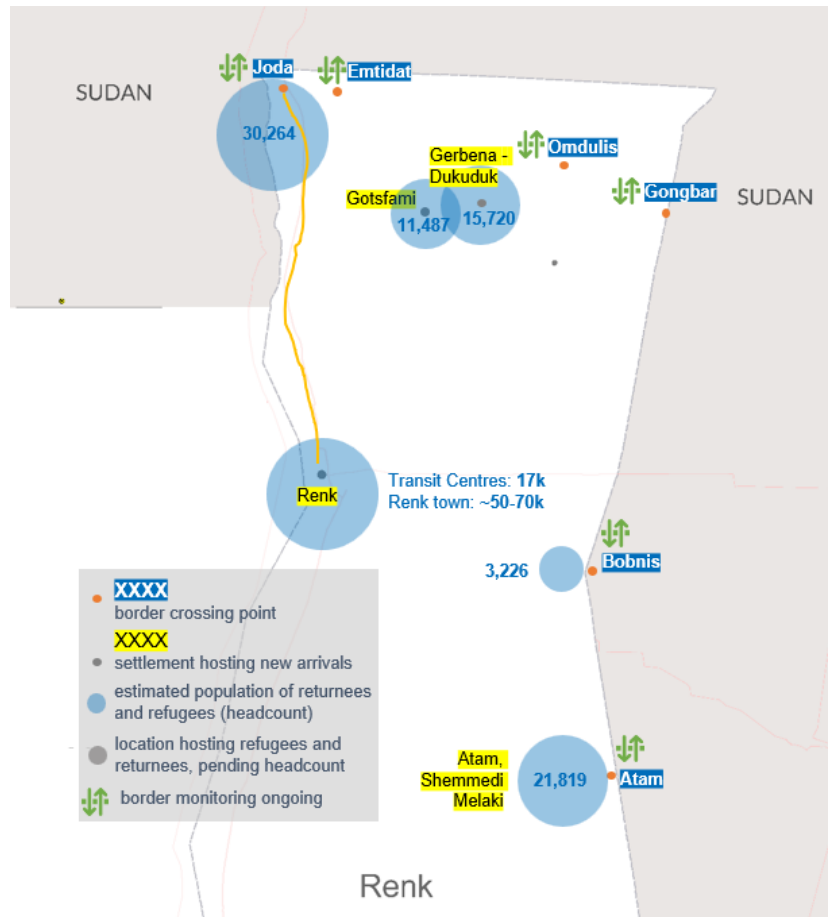
humanitarian **partners**

Key Highlights

- Headcounts were conducted along Joda border and in communities hosting arrivals from the informal border crossings, estimating **82,516 refugees and returnees across eight remote locations**, the majority arriving in the past weeks. Most arrivals entering via Joda Border Point are South Sudanese returnees from refugee camps across White Nile State. In contrast, those entering via unofficial crossings are mainly Sudanese nationals from Sennar and Blue Nile States.
- Since early December, an average of 3,000 refugees and returnees arrive at Renk County daily, over half via the informal border crossings. **Partners have established border monitoring at all six border crossings.**
- Health workers in Renk County Hospital have treated over **200** weapon-wounded individuals, with three reported fatalities. Additional tents have been set up, and medical capacity expanded.

Situation Overview

The hostilities in Sudan’s Blue Nile, Sennar and White Nile States, including the areas close to the border with South Sudan, continued, leading to more displacement, including into South Sudan. On 19 December, three WFP staff were killed in aerial bombardment in Blue Nile State¹. The security situation at the Joda official border point has improved following the resumption of humanitarian activities on December 10. New arrivals had decreased as of 20 December to approximately 3,000 per day across all border crossings combined. Upon entering via these points, new arrivals set up informal sites across eight arrival locations in host community villages. Those arriving have already established makeshift shelters and prefer to remain in these hosting sites, integrating into the local community.



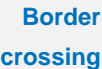









Response

Given the scale of arrivals and remoteness of locations, the partners are prioritising onward transportation to decongest the border areas and provide lifesaving protection, WASH, and health services in the hosting communities. With many refugees and returnees unwilling to move further from the border and waiting for the security situation to improve, this poses numerous risks in the areas close to the border, including cholera and limited resources like water and health supplies. Local authorities and host communities show solidarity and work to allocate land where new arrivals can settle temporarily, setting up makeshift shelters whenever possible and generously sharing water, food, and other resources. The partners are working with the county authorities to identify land for a new reception centre south of Joda. They are finalising the arrangement for extending the transit site in Renk, which will allow to scale up the transit capacity and decongest it.

Additionally, local authorities have identified land in Renk town which could be used by the new arrivals, primarily returnees, who wish to stay. Such a progressive move may allow a shift from emergency response to solutions for those who want to stay and integrate. However, additional resources would be needed to support this initiative, like HLP, civil documentation, and shelters, and the expansion of water, health and education services in Renk town. Through inter-agency coordination, humanitarian partners plan to develop a comprehensive strategic response plan for the new influx in Renk County. This plan will embed conflict sensitivity and encompass short-term emergency interventions to save lives and long-term sustainable solutions.

¹ Statement by WFP Executive Director Cindy McCain on tragic loss of staff members in Sudan

Overview of border crossing points and hosting communities

 Border crossing	Joda	Emtidat	Omdulis & Gongbar	Atam	Bobnis
 Border monitoring	 continuous	 since 19 Dec	 since 17 Dec	 since 19 Dec	 since 20 Dec
 Average daily arrivals²	1,500	210	500	600	276
 Host communities	Joda Wunthou		Jerbana, Dukuduk, Gotsfami	Atam, Shemmedi, Melaki	Shemmedi
 Headcount (individuals)	30,264	n/a	27,207	21,819	3,226

ONWARD TRANSPORT

- UNHCR and IOM have scaled up the relocation of returnees and refugees from the Joda border to Renk and out of Renk to the final destinations in the past week. The maximum capacity to scale up relocations out of Renk is 1,500 individuals daily.
- IOM has transported 493,599 individuals from the Joda border to Renk TC and 174,309 out of Renk to the final destinations since the start of the crisis.
- On 18 December, UNHCR, with partners, relocated 1,024 refugees to Aweil and Ajoung Thok, bringing the total number of refugees relocated out of Renk to refugee hosting areas to 12,602 individuals.



PROTECTION

- Protection partners have established border monitoring at all six border crossings, conducting counts of arrivals and outflows, their profiles, areas of origin, and intentions.
- Due to the proximity of fighting to the Sudan – South Sudan border, the authorities have agreed to enhance the presence of military and police personnel to strengthen screening processes and identify potential combatants among the incoming population.
- 82,516 returnees and refugees have been counted across the communities hosting new arrivals³. New arrivals who have settled along the main road between Renk town and the Joda border make up 38 per cent (30,264 individuals) of those counted. Of these, some 6,000 are hosted in areas around the Joda Reception Centre, further congesting it and stretching limited services.
- The headcount in Renk TC is planned for 23 December. The last headcount was done on 3 December, indicating 16,761 returnees and refugees, four times the capacity.
- **Identification of Persons with Specific Needs (PSN):** Since the onset of the surge, partners scaled up the screening and identification of vulnerable individuals: 1,208 PSNs have been identified, consisting of 285 males and 923 females. These individuals have varying needs, including disabilities, pregnant and lactating mothers, unaccompanied and separated children, older people, and those with serious medical conditions.

² These are estimates for the informal border crossings as the border monitoring commenced several days ago

³ Please note as many of these refugees and returnees arrived via informal border crossings at a time when no border monitoring was conducted, or during the days when

Most of these individuals were transported to Renk, where they received immediate referrals to health and registration services.

- **Child Protection:** At the protection desk, sixty-five (65) cases of unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) were screened in Wuntau, Atam and Chemmedi. While many of these children have been reunited with their biological parents within hours of separation, significant risks remain at unofficial crossing points and in hard-to-reach areas with limited network communication.
- **Gender-Based Violence (GBV):** Incidents of Gender-Based Violence, particularly intimate partner violence, are reportedly increasing in Atam and Gerbena, as noted by the Boma administrator. Integrated sexual and reproductive health and GBV emergency responses are prioritised, including GBV case management, cash assistance for survivors, and the distribution of dignity kits. Additionally, emergency obstetric and newborn care services and reproductive health supplies will be provided. To ensure the continuity of the humanitarian response, inter-agency emergency reproductive health kits and dignity kits will be prepositioned in Renk.



FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

- In the past two weeks, WFP and partners have delivered 15.77 metric tons of fortified biscuits to 40,064 refugees and returnees. These nutrient-rich biscuits are vital in emergencies, offering high nutritional value, ease of use, and long shelf life. They are especially crucial for vulnerable groups like children and pregnant women.
- WFP has also provided USD 120,099 in cash-based transfers to 11,257 new arrivals in Renk, empowering them to meet their immediate needs and support the local economy.
- Additionally, WFP distributed 3.17 metric tons of specialised nutritious food to 684 children and 251 pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls (PBW/G) to combat moderate acute malnutrition. So far, 6,595 children and 1,179 PBW/G have been assisted with 10.61 metric tons of nutritious food.



HEALTH

- Health actors have treated over 200 wounded in Renk County Hospital, with three reported fatalities. With more wounded arriving daily, health partners have set up additional tents to accommodate the growing number of injured people. They are expanding medical staff capacity to meet the increased demand.
- Cholera prevention and response mechanisms have been enhanced, with cholera screening and isolation units established at the Joda border and Renk Transit Centres. Health partners have completed Oral Cholera Vaccine (OCV) campaign in Renk County, reaching 98.5% of the target population, covering 147,392 people aged 12 months and older. Vaccination efforts are underway in Gerbena and the other newly identified arrival sites.



WATER AND SANITATION

- Access to clean water remains a challenge in the informal settlements. For example, the water in the haffir in Jerbana is drying up, forcing people to use another one 1 km away. Host communities and new arrivals share the water, and if not addressed, there is a risk of community tensions due to competition for limited resources.
- In Gongbar and Omdulis, Oxfam has completed the distribution of non-food items (2 buckets, toilet water containers/Biiriks, and a bar of bathing soap) to 600 beneficiaries — 300 from the host community and 300 from the new arrivals.

Working in Partnership and Funding

- UNHCR is leading Inter-Agency Coordination in Renk. A Senior Inter-Agency Coordinator is based in Renk and reports to the Humanitarian Coordinator and UNHCR Representative, due to the mixed nature of the inflows.
- Agencies are very grateful for the financial support provided by donors who have contributed to their activities with unearmarked and broadly earmarked funds and those who have contributed directly to the response. The South Sudan Chapter of the Sudan Regional Refugee Response Plan 2024 is only 24% funded, while the South Sudan 2024 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan is funded at 64%.
- [South Sudan Country Refugee Response Plan 2025](#) was launched on 20 December, appealing for \$468 million to meet emergency needs and longer-term solutions for refugees and to support host communities.

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