Sudan Situation: Surge in Arrivals to South Sudan

Border monitoring in Atam, one of the unofficial border crossings from Sudan to South Sudan. ©UNHCR/Reason Runyanga

100,000+	12	6	82,516	35
estimated **new arrivals into Renk** since surge	New arrival locations identified	Entry points, **five** of which are unofficial.	individuals **recorded** (headcounts)	humanitarian **partners**

Key Highlights

- During the reporting week, daily arrivals from Sudan have decreased to an average of 1,500 a day, including through the informal border crossings. Due to limited resources in the border communities, many new arrivals proceed to new areas – the number of locations hosting new arrivals has increased from 8 to 12 since the last update.
- According to the headcount conducted on 24-25 December, a total of **22,535 returnees and refugees** are staying in the Renk Transit Centres. **Eighty-six percent (86%) are returnees**, with the majority being women and children, making up 83% of the population. This figure exceeds the centres' intended capacity by five times and represents the highest recorded number of people in the Renk Transit Centres in the past 10 months.
- Between 27 and 28 December, partners conducted a **rapid intention survey at the Joda border** among populations settled along the road. Preliminary results indicate that **58 per cent of new arrivals intend to stay at the border**.
- The partners have scaled up WASH, health, nutrition, and protection services in the communities that are hosting new arrivals, focusing on supporting services for the entire community to promote peaceful coexistence.

Situation Overview

The number of new arrivals has decreased over the past week, with a daily average of approximately 1,500 individuals. Many families have moved to locations such as Chemmedi, Gossfami, Halaka, Rumela and Gerger due to the lack of water and other services in the border areas. The security situation at the Joda border and other unofficial crossings remains unpredictable.

Border crossings and communities hosting new arrivals

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Final boundary between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined.

Local authorities and host communities have shown generosity and hospitality by allowing new arrivals to use community land for temporary settlement and integrate into the local setting. However, this hospitality is being challenged by the scarcity of resources, including limited water, health, and nutrition services. WASH remains a critical gap in these locations. While water trucking has commenced to Gerbena and Bebnis, this is a temporary measure – the partners are looking for sustainable water supply solutions from the outset. Key gaps, including child protection and gender-based violence (GBV) services, require targeted interventions, such as deploying mobile teams to underserved areas. This evolving situation underscores the urgent need for an increased presence of partners to assess and monitor conditions while scaling up essential services such as Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), health, nutrition, and protection.

Response

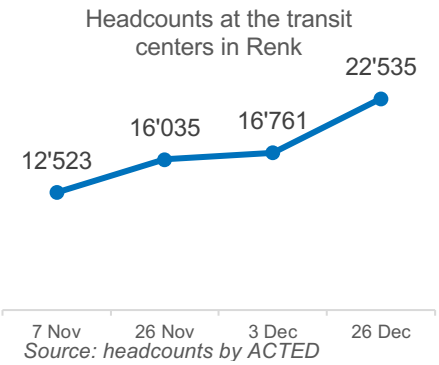
Partners have prioritised immediate life-saving services at the border and in communities hosting returnees and refugees, where the local capacities are overwhelmed (especially concerning water and health). Onward transportation from the border remains a priority number one. Border monitoring, headcounts and intention surveys are rolled out to enable planning. To foster integration, local authorities and communities provide land for temporary settlement, but resource limitations, particularly in water and health services, highlight the need for sustainable solutions. Cholera prevention, community-based health services, and infrastructure upgrades are being scaled up alongside intensified hygiene promotion and improved sanitation facilities. Recognising the strain on host communities, partners work to embed conflict sensitivity and sustainability into their response plans, integrating emergency actions with long-term solutions to enhance resilience and support local integration.

ONWARD TRANSPORT

- During the reporting period, IOM facilitated the relocation of 3,791 returnees and refugees from the Joda border to the Renk Transit Centre. Additionally, 387 returnees were supported with onward transportation from Renk to Malakal via river transport (boats) to their destinations within South Sudan.
- No refugee relocations were conducted during the reporting period.

PROTECTION

- Border monitoring activities continued at the Joda border and unofficial crossing points, including Emtidad, Gerbena (Omdulis&Gongbar), Bebnis and Atam.
- Partners provided protection services and information for 1,028 vulnerable returnees and refugees at the Joda border and Renk Transit Centres. Services provided included awareness on key protection messages, cash for protection, fast-tracking of services, protection monitoring, and referrals to specialised services.



Source: headcounts by ACTED

- Twenty-four individuals with specific needs were identified at unofficial crossing points and documented at the protection desk in Gerger Payam (Halaka village).
- Partners provided community-based psychosocial support to 874 individuals (304 males, 532 females), including psychological first aid, counselling, peer support, psychoeducation, home visits, and referrals. These activities were carried out at the Joda border, transit centres, and along the riverside.
- Gaps in child protection and GBV services remain in communities hosting arrivals through unofficial border crossings. Partners are intensifying their efforts to provide mobile protection assistance.

FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

- Over the past three weeks, the partners distributed 41 metric tons of fortified biscuits to 68,141 refugees and returnees who recently arrived through formal and informal border crossings.
- Of the 1,163 children screened in Gossfami, 2% were identified with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) and 8% with Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM).
- All locations are covered by nutrition services, except Gossfami, where the services are planned for deployment in the coming days.

HEALTH

- The partners are scaling up health services through Primary Health Care Centres (PHCCs) in Gerbena, Chemmedi, Bebnis, Halaka, and Rumela, along with mobile clinics in Gossfami and Atam. However, a significant gap remains in Dukduk, requiring urgent attention. Efforts are underway to scale up health services in Halaka, with plans to conduct a comprehensive health needs assessment to guide the expansion.
- 1,618 households in Gossfami received 3,898 mosquito nets.
- Cholera response efforts are ongoing, including treatment at the hospital and community-level outreach through the Cholera Treatment Unit (CTU), targeted interventions in affected households and neighbourhoods, and six Oral Rehydration Points (ORPs) for mild cases.
- The health clinic at Joda border is overwhelmed, struggling to meet the needs of the growing population that has settled at Joda and along the road.

WATER AND SANITATION

- Water trucking has commenced in Jerbena and Bobnis, with efforts underway to scale up the response in Gossfami, Halaka, Rumela, and Gerbena. However, significant gaps remain in water provision in Dukduk, Atam, and Chemmedi.
- In Wunthou/Joda, an additional 20,000-liter water tank has been installed to ensure adequate water supply at reception areas and non-PSN site. However, rising river levels have caused flooding at the Surface Water Treatment (SWAT) area, posing a risk to operations.
- Poor hygiene and sanitation conditions persist at non-PSN areas at the Joda border, where many new arrivals are temporarily settled.
- Hygiene promotion activities have been intensified, including door-to-door hygiene education campaigns and community engagement. Additional hygiene promotion activities continue in Gerbena.
- Maintenance and repair activities are ongoing, including cleaning latrines, desludging shower sumps, and repairing 28 blocks in Transit Center 2 (TC2) and 10 latrine stances at the port/docking area. With increasing populations in TC2, latrines and showers are under strain, necessitating the construction of additional facilities to improve service levels. Discussions are ongoing on replacing four decommissioned blocks.

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.

CONTACTS

Andrii Mazurenko, Senior Inter-Agency Coordination Officer, mazurenk@unhcr.org