



Refugees in Upper Nile State

FACT SHEET



Background and operational context

- In September 2011, fighting erupted between Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) in Blue Nile State, Sudan.
- Since then close to 110,000 refugees fled westwards into South Sudan's Upper Nile state. They cited fighting and bombing as the reasons for their flight.
- On arrival, refugees are generally exhausted, hungry and dehydrated from having travelled on foot for several weeks, without access to proper food and having had to drink untreated water from open sources.
- Three formal settlements (Doro, Jammam and Yusuf Batil) have been established where humanitarian actors provide material assistance and basic services.

Challenges

- The situation is complex in terms of sheer refugee numbers in the remote north-west of the country, where virtually all aspects of aid delivery have to be brought in from outside. There is no infrastructure, industry or local technical capacity. UNHCR opened new supply routes through Ethiopia, and mounted an airlift to deliver non-food items for 50,000 from Juba and tents from Nairobi.
- Access to water has been a major problem in Jammam settlement as the population of refugees began around March this year. Transporting drilling equipment and accessories has been an arduous exercise. Drilling efforts produced mixed results.
- An alternative site was identified in Yusuf Batil; the operation to move 15,000 refugees to the new site had to be suspended when a group of 32,000 arrived at the Elfoj border area; the latter had to be relocated in order to avert a crisis.
- Poor secondary roads and tracks have begun to deteriorate since the arrival of the torrential rains.



Statistics

Location	Population
Doro	40,289
Batil	25,000
Jammam	34,871
Border Areas	7,000
TOTAL	107,160

UNHCR's role

- Co-ordinate responses to refugees' needs with South Sudan authorities as well as UN and NGO partners through regular consultations at both point of delivery (Maban) and central (Juba) levels.
- **The principal protection priority is to relocate refugees from border areas for their safety and in order to maintain the civilian character of refugee settlements.** Relocation from the border takes place regularly. Humanitarian actors comb border areas to locate refugees in consultation with local authorities, and move them away. Border areas have on occasion been the target of aerial bombardment (eg. Elfoj last January).
- Protection monitoring, registration, child identification and family reunion of separated and unaccompanied children, identifying and addressing concerns of persons with specific needs (including prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence) are key priorities.
- Coordination with the UN Mission in South Sudan and the UN Mine Action Centre regarding security including UXO clearance in settlement areas is on-going.
- Provide basic life-sustaining assistance to refugees, including food, shelter, non-food items, water-sanitation-hygiene, nutrition and health services. Support livelihood activities such as cultivation and brick-making.



Recent developments

- With the unexpected arrival of 35,000 refugees in New Guffa (3,000) and Elfoj (32,000). The 3,000 made their way to Doro settlement. Those in Elfoj were in poor physical condition. MSF reported a number of deaths among this group. The immediate priority was to move them from the border in order to avert a crisis.

Operational Responses

- The emergency relocation from water-strapped Jammam to the newly established Yusuf Batil settlement—which had just begun—was suspended and all resources (staff, vehicle, etc) deployed to the border. A temporary site was established at Hofra; however it soon ran out of water and the refugees had to be relocated to another temporary site, Kilo 18. 25,000 refugees have been moved to Yusuf Batil where they have started a new life; the relocation operation continues.
- UNHCR established an air bridge from Juba to Paloich in Upper Nile state to expedite the delivery of 2,000 family tents and non-food items, including 5,000 kitchen sets, 13,000 blankets, 194,000 pieces of soap, 12,000 plastic sheets, 20,000 sleeping mats, 20,000 jerry cans, 20,000 mosquito nets. Accessories for water drilling equipment were also delivered.
- Two additional boreholes in Yusuf Batil were found to have a high yield of water, while another showed promise during the development phase. Drilling efforts continue. With the onset of the rainy season, UNHCR water specialists have identified a back-up solution: using jet drilling techniques to extract water from nearby shallow sources.
- Negotiations with state authorities and local communities are continuing on the identification of new sites with access to water from the River Nile.

