



SUDAN: SOUTH SUDANESE REFUGEE EMERGENCY

26 February 2017

FLASH UPDATE

KEY FIGURES

31,299

South Sudanese refugee arrivals reported since 1 January 2017

8,417

New arrivals reported in White Nile in 2017

8,196

New arrivals reported in South Kordofan in 2017

7,148

New arrivals reported in West Kordofan in 2017

6,829

New arrivals reported in East Darfur in 2017

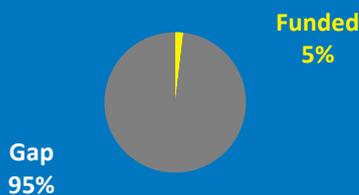
328,339

South Sudanese refugees in Sudan since December 2013.

FUNDING

USD 166.65 million

requested for the operation



PRIORITIES

- Provision of immediate life-saving support to new arrivals, including food, health, nutrition and non-food item assistance.
- UNHCR-COR household-level registration at reception centres.
- UNHCR-COR biometric registration at refugee sites and settlements.

At the start of the year an increasing numbers of South Sudanese people have fled into Sudan, with nearly 11,000 refugees arriving in Sudan by the end of January and 20,214 reported to have arrived in February (as of 26 February). So far, nearly 32,000 refugees are estimated to have arrived in Sudan in 2017. UNHCR is working with local authorities to verify reported arrival figures.

This follows reports emerging from South Sudan in January of increased displacement in Wau Shilluk and Malakal areas which are along the South Sudanese border, following the escalation of reported clashes in Upper Nile and Unity states. Large internal displacements have been reported in Renk and Kodok in Upper Nile near the Sudan border. There have been reports also in February of fighting near Raja in Western Bahr al Ghazal, as well as reports of population movements from Aweil in Northern El Bahr Ghazal state, which may result in additional influxes into Sudan. UNHCR is watching the developments closely and monitoring arrival trends.

In 2016, conflict and food insecurity were key drivers of flight into Sudan, with the many new arrivals demonstrating critical levels of malnutrition. This trend is expected to continue through 2017, as affected areas in South Sudan see depleted household food stocks and face increasing food prices. On 20 February, UN officials declared famine in parts of Unity state in South Sudan. According to the latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) update¹, the food security situation is expected to deteriorate further in coming months. In addition to Unity state, the states most at risk include Western and Northern Bahr al Ghazal and Upper Nile, where refugees have originated from previously.

UNHCR was expecting up to 60,000 new arrivals in Sudan in 2017 as part of its regional response. However, the level of new arrivals has thus far surpassed initial expectations.

NEW REFUGEE ARRIVALS

White Nile

- Since the beginning of February, over 4,600 refugees have arrived in the state, with over 1,000 having arrived in the first week alone. A total of 8,417 refugees (2,268 households) have arrived through the three border entry points at Joda, Al Meginis and Al Kuek since 1 January to date.
- Expansion of the Al Waral II, Al Redis II and Um Sangour sites is underway in White Nile in anticipation of an increasing influx over the coming months.
- Refugees have reported walking for 5-7 days to reach Sudan, and initial estimates indicate that approximately 90% of the new arrivals are women and children. Many arrive exhausted and in poor health, often with critical levels of malnutrition.
- On 3 February, clashes close to Sudan forced the evacuation of the Al Kuek North border point in White Nile. It is estimated that approximately 900 people were subsequently assisted with transport to Um Sangour refugee site. A new entry point has been established at Um Jelala, about 10 km from the border, where temporary registration of new arrivals has resumed by the Sudan Red Crescent Society (SRCS). SRCS is providing new arrivals with hot meals, water, medical assistance and nutrition screening. The refugees are then transferred to a refugee site, where they are biometrically registered by UNHCR and non-food items (NFIs) and shelters arrangements are made.
- WFP provides emergency food assistance for the most vulnerable families upon arrival, including children under 5 years and pregnant and lactating women.

¹ Full report with IPC classification maps is available here:

http://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_South_Sudan_Key%20Messages_Feb2017.pdf

South Kordofan

- Approximately 7,216 refugees have reportedly arrived in El Leri in February, for a total of 8,196 reported refugee arrivals in 2017 so far in South Kordofan. Local authorities have reported a continuing influx of new arrivals through Al Amira reception centre, near temporary settlements in El Leri.
- Refugee community leaders have indicated that more people are on their way from the Malakal area of Upper Nile, South Sudan. Reports also indicate that displaced populations in Unity state intend to enter Sudan through South Kordofan; however, it is difficult to predict when they will be able to cross into Sudan and how many will come. It is also unclear if new arrivals will only transit through El Leri on their way to White Nile.
- An inter-agency needs assessment mission to El Leri is currently underway (21-27 February), led by UNHCR with Sudan's Commission for Refugees (COR) and Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC), to assess the situation on the ground. A preliminary assessment indicated that WASH, food, health and nutrition services, as well as NFIs, are immediate priorities.
- UNHCR has begun the distribution of 1,000 NFI kits to new arrivals. WFP has dispatched emergency rations to cover the needs of both new arrivals and the pre-existing arrivals. UNICEF is providing temporary water trucking to Al Amira reception centre and El Leri for the next 45 days while partners explore more sustainable solution to local water shortages for both refugees and host community members. The state Ministry of Social Affairs is coordinating alternative care arrangements for over 1,000 unaccompanied and separated children (UASC).

West Kordofan

- According to HAC, an estimated 5,462 refugees have arrived in El Meriam and Kharasana since 1 February. This brings the total new arrivals since January to 7,148. Reports indicate that the refugees are departing from the Fan Arkoj border area in South Sudan, and crossing through Sudan's Hejlil entry point. HAC has facilitated the transportation of newly arrived refugees by truck from Hejlil to Kharasana.
- UNHCR and partners are planning an inter-agency needs assessment mission to depart this week to Kharasana and El Meriam to verify arrival figures and assess the situation on the ground at the reception centres. Initial reports from the centres indicate that WASH, health and nutrition services are among the immediate response priorities.
- SRCS and UNHCR have coordinated the delivery of 1,500 NFI kits to Kharasana to respond to the recent influx, and Concern Worldwide has distributed 1,200 NFI kits to new arrivals at El Meriam. The scale-up of reception services is underway, and UNHCR is supporting COR and HAC in order to ensure reception centres are fully functional and able to respond to new arrival needs by mid-March.

East Darfur

- Refugees are arriving to East Darfur at a steady rate. In total, some 6,829 refugees have arrived since January into East Darfur. Since 1 February, 2,529 refugees have arrived at Kario site alone. It is estimated that over 20,000 refugees are currently now in Kario. New arrivals are biometrically registered and receive food, shelter and non-food item packages.
- Community leaders have also reported new arrivals in February to Old Raja (approximately 2,200), El Ferdous (1,500) and Abu Jabra (1,900). UNHCR has established a new mobile registration team to conduct household-level registration in these locations to verify the figures and facilitate access to immediate assistance.
- UNHCR and COR are working with local authorities to expand the reception capacity near key border crossing points to provide immediate life-saving assistance to refugees upon arrival in country, and support their onward transportation to the main service sites.

FUNDING NEEDS

UNHCR anticipates a continuous influx of South Sudanese refugees into Sudan throughout 2017. Initial resource requirements are based on estimates for up to 60,000 new refugee arrivals by the end of 2017. UNHCR has actively engaged in contingency planning to ensure the agency and its partners are ready to respond to a worsening situation. There is an existing readiness to scale-up the response in order to address higher levels of refugee arrivals in Sudan. This may entail a revision of resource needs, which will continue to be reviewed as the year progresses.

Funding the response remains a concern. In 2016, the response under the inter-agency South Sudan Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRRP) was just 24% funded, for a total of USD\$38 million raised to meet the needs of over 273,000 South Sudanese refugees. A lack of funding meant that inter-agency partners were only able to provide the most basic services to cover critical life-saving needs of the refugees.

In 2017, UNHCR and partners have appealed for USD \$166.65 million. So far, inter-agency partners have raised approximately 5% of funds needed.