

55,943

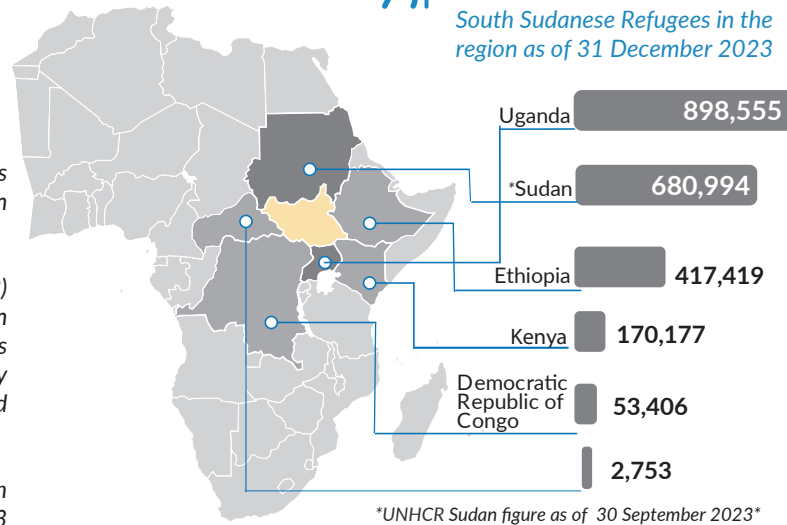
South Sudanese spontaneous refugee returnees have been reported in December 2023

An accumulated number of **1,033,378** spontaneous refugee returnees have been reported since the signing of the revitalized peace agreement in October 2018 to 31 December 2023

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in South Sudan and the South Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) are hereby pleased to share the monthly update detailing the status of spontaneous refugee returns in South Sudan. This update specifically addresses the South Sudanese returning who have been adversely affected by the ongoing conflict in Sudan.

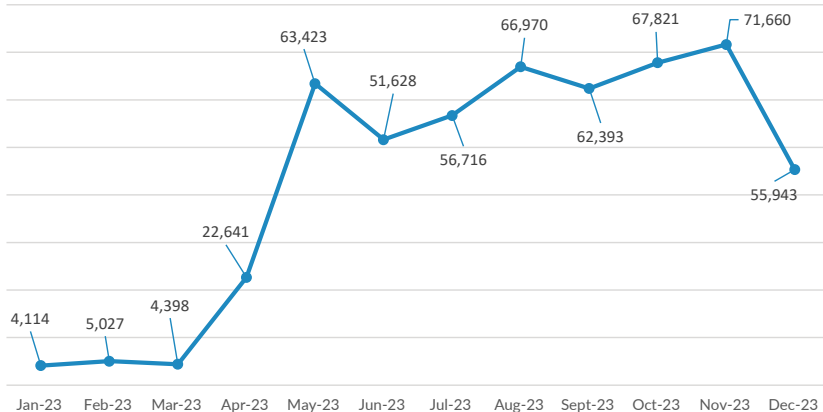
The dashboard highlights cross-border refugee movements of South Sudanese from neighboring countries during the month of December 2023

2.2 Million Refugees
South Sudanese Refugees in the region as of 31 December 2023

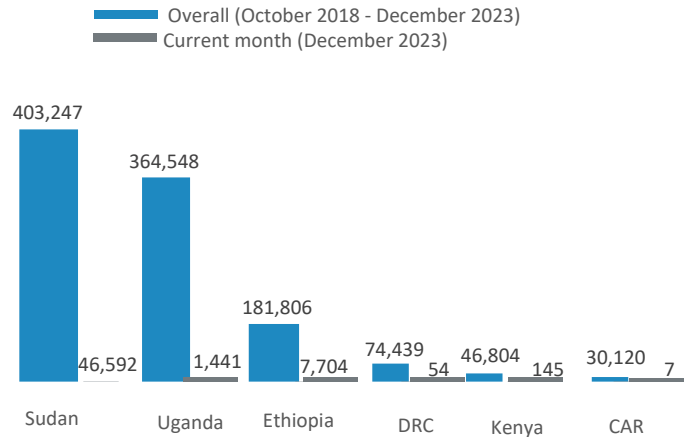


Monthly arrival for the last 12 months

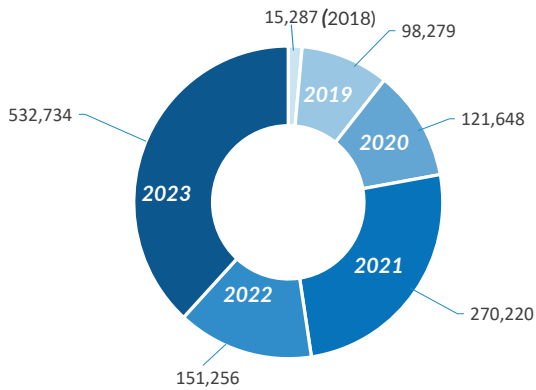
According to UNHCR, IOM and RRC Joint border monitoring data, a total of **46,592** South Sudanese have been reported from Sudan while a total of **7,704** from Ethiopia in December 2023



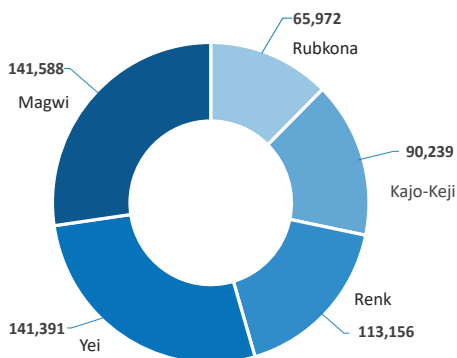
Spontaneous Refugee Returns by Country of Asylum



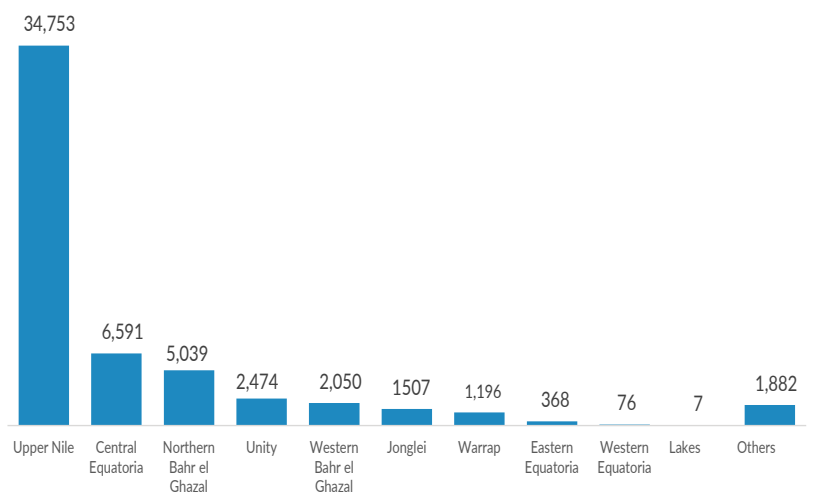
Returns from October 2018 - December 2023



Top 5 cumulative counties of return from October 2018 to December 2023

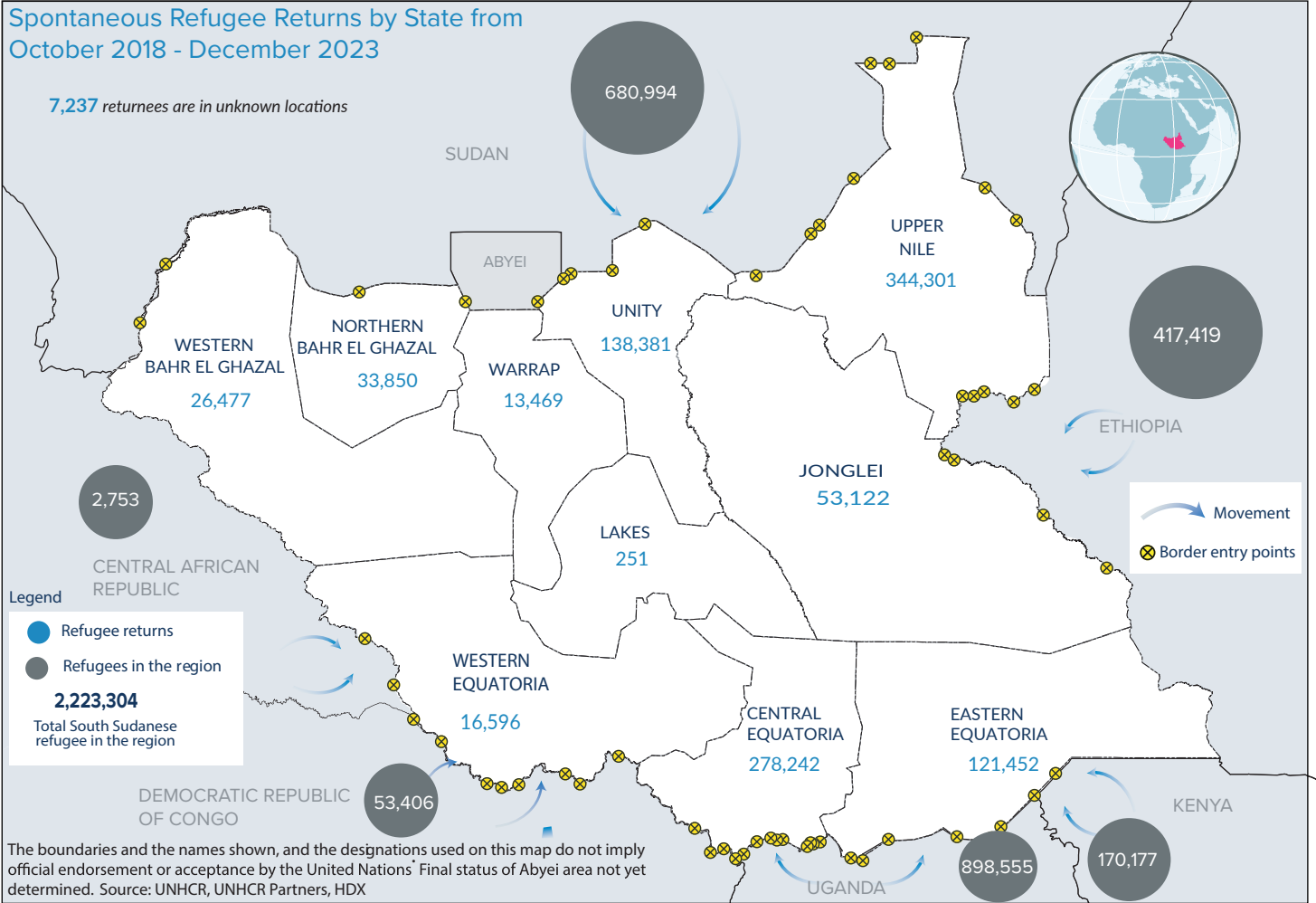


Returns per State for the month of December 2023



Top 3 border entry point - December 2023





KEY HIGHLIGHTS ON REFUGEE RETURNS

The return of **45,333** South Sudanese was verified and reported in December 2023. There is a significant decrease (37%) as compared to the returns recorded in the month of November 2023.

The significant decrease is due to resumption of food ration in Country of Asylum especially in Ethiopia camps, lack of transport money where cited as the to main points which impacted the spontaneous refugee returns to South Sudan during the reporting month.

Most of the returns in December 2023 were from Sudan through Wunthou (Joda) in Upper Nile while returns from Ethiopia through Degjock in Jonglei State and Burebiey in Upper Nile State

This information on returnees was validated through UNHCR - IOM, RRC joint border monitoring on Sudan, Ethiopian and UNHCR Spontaneous Refugee border monitoring interviews for Uganda, Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo and Central Africa Republic during month of December 2023 in areas of return in the following **10** states; Upper Nile, Central Equatoria, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Unity, Jonglei, Western Bahr El Ghazal, warrap, Eastern Equatoria, Western Equatoria and Lakes. Most of the verified returnees to the beforementioned States were mostly from Sudan (79%), Ethiopia (17%) and less than 10% from Uganda, Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo and Central Africa Republic.

PUSH FACTORS

The most cited reasons for leaving Country of Asylum include:-

- I- Insecurity in country of asylum (60%)
- II- Lack of employment, livelihood and economic opportunities (13%).
- III- Reduction of food ration in Refugee camps (9%)

Contributing partners



PULL FACTORS

The most cited reasons for returning to South Sudan from Country of Asylum include:-

- I- Improvement of security situation in South Sudan (21%)
- II- Reunite with family members (15%)
- III- Improved availability of services in South Sudan (12%)

KEY PROTECTION CONCERNS AT BORDER POINTS AND IN AREAS OF RETURN ARE:

The most cited protection concerns at border points and in areas of returns include:-

- I- Physical violence (12%)
- II- Psychological / Emotional Abuse(11%)
- III- Medical emergency (10%)
- IV- Exploitation (Corruption, Extortion) (10%)

METHODOLOGY

UNHCR in collaboration with Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) and partners monitors cross-border movements in areas of high return and at 42 border entry points with Sudan recording the highest border entry points. Information is collected regularly at border points and in areas of high returns through KII and FGD. The information was then triangulated with data collected during physical observations, and meetings with local authorities, faith-based leaders, law enforcement agents, and immigration officers at border entry points and areas of returns.

Disclaimer: The number recorded is only indicative, and it covers the borders where UNHCR and partners currently have presence. It is most likely that more returnees are arriving to South Sudan than recorded due to using unofficial border points and/or travelling at night.