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PRESS RELEASE

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Violence in South Sudan causes new influx in Ethiopia's Gambella region

The situation in South Sudan's northern counties of Nasir and Ulang rapidly escalated, causing significant displacement and humanitarian concerns. Since mid-February 2025, the violence has led to the displacement of tens of thousands within South Sudan, with 50,000 people newly displaced within Nasir and 34,000 in Ulang.

According to the local authority in Gambella, many have fled to neighbouring Ethiopia. By March 10, over 10,000 people had crossed into Gambella Region, a sharp increase from 6,900 just a few days earlier on March 6. These new arrivals, predominantly from South Sudan's Upper Nile State, are crossing through the Burbiey border of Gambella region. The numbers are increasing at an alarming rate, and local authorities are tracking and assist the displaced individuals, as they are dispersed across various communities, especially in Burbiey and Matar area.

Most of the new arrivals have entered Ethiopia via Wanthoa, with movements extending through Burbiey to Matar. Many are seeking shelter with local communities, while others have found refuge in makeshift shelters using plastic sheeting.

UNHCR Country Representative in Ethiopia, Andrew Mbogori, has called for more resources to respond to the growing needs of the displaced populations. "The absorption capacity in the border areas is severely overstretched, and local authorities are facing significant challenges in managing the crisis. The numbers are expected to continue rising, creating more urgent need for assistance", he added.

The Regional Government, through its Health Bureau, alongside *Médecins Sans Frontières* (MSF) are currently the only first responders on the ground providing first aid, treatment and referral services to appropriate hospitals in response to the Cholera outbreak The Regional Health Bureau is doing its utmost best to provide health services to the newly arrived in Burbiey but effectively has dramatic resource gaps to maintain its current response levels.

Conscious of the potential of ethnic tensions, the regional authorities have indicated their willingness to temporarily allocate land in the border area to host new arrivals.

UNHCR and the Government of Ethiopia urge the international community to step up support to this new and emerging crisis.

UNHCR teams are on the ground and have completed a risk analysis taking into consideration different scenarios and is putting in place the relevant mitigation measures. To better understand the ongoing situation, UNHCR engaged in cross border meetings between South Sudan, Sudan, Kenya, Uganda, DRC and, importantly, Ethiopia.

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