



15 August 2012

Refugees in Unity State

FACT SHEET



Statistics

Location	Total
Nyeel	844
Pariang	1,051
Yida	60,366
TOTAL	62,261



Background/Operational Context

- ◇ In June 2011, fighting broke out between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) in Southern Kordofan state, Sudan, following disputed election results.
- ◇ Some 300,000 people were displaced internally as a result. Significant numbers fled southward across the border into Unity state in South Sudan.
- ◇ Some 60,000 settled spontaneously at Yida, close to the disputed border area of Jau, where there is sporadic fighting.
- ◇ The principal cause for alarm is the proximity of refugees in Yida a volatile conflict zone. This raises grave concerns about security of refugees as well as the need to maintain the civilian character of the settlement.
- ◇ UNHCR advocates for the voluntary relocation of refugees to safer areas away from the border as Yida is the most dangerous refugee site in South Sudan. While relocation is the preferred option, UNHCR continues to provide life saving assistance in Yida.
- ◇ With seasonal rains in full flow, Yida has become inaccessible and air movements are the only reliable means of transporting life saving supplies and personnel.

Operational Challenges

- ◇ Security of refugees and humanitarian workers.
- ◇ The rapid population growth has put pressure on already overstretched sanitation, water and health services in Yida. The main challenge being faced is to scale up the numbers of latrines and boreholes to match the pace of arrival of refugees. Diarrhea and malnutrition are the main cause of morbidity among refugees, particularly children under-five. Agencies are deploying efforts to increase facilities and services in order to keep up with demand.
- ◇ Delivery of humanitarian aid during the rainy season as the roads have become impassable.



UNHCR's role

- ◇ **Co-ordinate** humanitarian responses to the refugees' needs, with regular consultations at camp, state, national and international levels.
- ◇ **Provide** basic life-sustaining assistance to all refugees, including protection, food, water-sanitation-hygiene, nutrition and health services. In Nyeel and Pariang, refugees also have access to expanded services in primary and secondary education along with livelihoods support.
- ◇ Protection priorities include to **monitor and register all refugees, as well as find solutions** for separated unaccompanied children.
- ◇ **Identify and address** concerns of persons with specific needs including prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence.
- ◇ Dialogue with refugees to relocate to safer areas away from the border. Refugees wish to remain close to their homeland, the Nuba Mountains. Moreover, they prefer the mountainous landscape of Yida to the flatlands of Nyeel and Pariang settlements.
- ◇ **Negotiate** with the authorities to provide land for settlement and cultivation in an effort to foster refugee self-reliance in areas located at a safe distance from the border.

New Developments

- ◇ UNHCR is deeply concerned about the security of refugees in Unity state. A worsening security situation could put them in harm's way and seriously hamper the delivery of humanitarian aid.
- ◇ A new refugee commissioner has been appointed by the Governor of Unity state, to coordinate refugee affairs within the state. This will increase the government's role in the refugee sites.
- ◇ South Sudan Police is set to increase its presence in Yida with an additional 45 staff, bringing the total number of police in Yida to 60. Although this is a substantial improvement, there are still security gaps with one policeman for every 1000 refugees.

◇ There has been a decrease in the number of new arrivals in Unity state from approximately 1000 to 70 per day.

◇ With a population of 60,000 refugees, Yida is now the largest refugee site in South Sudan. New arrivals show signs of malnutrition. Most children with severe acute malnutrition are under the age of 24 months. The **SAM rate is 7.1%** and the **GAM rate is 25.90%**.

◇ Humanitarian actors are concerned about the high incidence of malaria which has been doubling weekly since the beginning of July.

◇ UNHCR is undertaking an airlift of Non Food Items for the refugees in Yida settlement. The items include 8970 plastic sheetings, 16,152 mosquito nets, 16,083 jerry cans, and 19,230 plastic buckets.

Operational Responses

◇ New partners with expertise in water, sanitation and hygiene are reinforcing the efforts of present actors. Operational responses include the drilling of six new boreholes to complement the existing six as well as construction of an additional 900 community latrines. Large scale health and hygiene promotion campaigns and education on vector control are being conducted to promote behavioural changes.

◇ Partners are widening nutrition programme coverage to stabilise the health status condition of the population. Other interventions include early detection mechanisms and community outreach programmes.

◇ UNHCR launched a USD 187 million funding appeal in June for funding to cater for the refugee influx in Unity and Upper Nile. There has been an increase in the number of humanitarian agencies operating in the area and others are scaling up their operations.

