



Update on South Sudan Operations

9 - 17 March 2013

Armed clashes create panic in Yida

On Sunday 17 March hundreds of refugees who fled an outbreak of fighting in Yida began returning to their homes. Yida is the largest camp in South Sudan with 69,842 registered refugees residing there.

Sustained gunfire erupted in the north-eastern section of the settlement around 6pm on Saturday night causing several hundred refugees, mostly women and children, to flee their homes. At the time of writing it was not clear what caused the clashes or who was involved.

Around 600 women and children who fled the fighting were sheltered in two compounds where water, sleeping mats, and other relief supplies were provided. UN peacekeepers stationed in Yida guarded the compounds overnight. With relative calm restored by Sunday morning most of those displaced by the fighting had begun returning voluntarily to their homes.

The incident highlights the UN refugee

agency's serious concerns over the civilian character of Yida settlement and its proximity to a contested border area.

During the week UNHCR launched an information campaign in Yida to sensitize refugees about the new camp that is being opened at Ajuong Thok, 90km from the disputed border zone. Refugees have the freedom to decide if they want to stay in Yida or start life in a new camp that is less congested and at a safer distance from the border.

Posters have been displayed all over the camp. At the food distribution point community mobilizers used public address systems to inform refugees of their rights and the services that will be available Ajuong. Women in particular raised concerns about opportunities and better lives.

Earlier this month, the South Sudan Deputy Refugee Commissioner with the refugee leadership in Yida to discuss the forthcoming move to Ajuong.

Meanwhile, the UNHCR Representative in South Sudan accompanied a high level delegation from Juba on a visit to the new refugee site. In attendance



Laborers are working against the clock to ensure the new refugee site at Ajuong Thok in Unity State is ready for the first convoy on 30 March. [Credit: UNMISS/M.Perret]

2013 budget and earmarked contributions

BUDGETS	219,045,253
CONTRIBUTIONS	
Common Humanitarian Fund	2,492,998
Denmark	1,828,223
Germany	1,828,223
Japan	14,000,000
UNAIDS	50,000
United Kingdom	4,425,682
USA	5,300,000
Total contributions	29,925,126

Registered refugees in South Sudan

Country of origin	Pop.
Central African Republic	1,589
Democratic Republic of Congo	18,437
Ethiopia	5,889
Sudan	191,992
Total	217,907

Source: <http://data.unhcr.org/>

were the Deputy Commissioner of the South Sudan Refugee Affairs Commissioner, the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for South Sudan, WFP Deputy Country Representative, Deputy EU Ambassador and UNMISS Unity State Coordinator on a visit to Unity state. The Commissioner of Pariang County was on hand to show them work in progress, including site clearance, demarcation of plots and construction of communal shelters.

Relocation from Yida is set to start on 30 March. ●

Contributors: K.Mahoney, T.Irwin

Nutrition completed survey among Sudanese refugees

The survey marks six months since a concerted effort was mounted to stabilise the condition of refugees living in the six camps in Unity and Upper Nile states. The outcome will verify the impact of those interventions and will be used to plan appropriate action to improve the nutritional status of refugees, and to reinforce existing programmes (Blanket Supplementary Feeding Programme, Therapeutic Supplementary Feeding Programme, Outpatient Therapeutic Feeding, Programme and Stabilization Centres, etc.)

UNHCR has completed the first annual nutrition survey in the camps where over 186,000 Sudanese refugees reside. Preliminary results are expected by mid-April and final results by the end of April.

The household level survey was initiated on 20 February. 60 trained enumerators conducted anthropometric (weight, height and mid upper arm circumference) measurements, oedema assessment alongside in depth interviews to determine the nutrition and anaemic status of children aged between 6 and 59 months, anaemic status of both children under five years of age and women of reproductive age, feeding practices on infant and young children and mortality assessments.

Last year, poor health and malnutrition emerged as the most perilous threats to the welfare of refugees, creating an imperative to maintain a high level of alertness.

Last July, alarm bells sounded in Yusuf Batil camp (Upper Nile state) when a preliminary survey conducted by health actors revealed a significant degree (39.8%) of malnourishment in children aged less than five years. Across the refugee camps in Upper Nile state 20-30% of children of that age were admitted into nutrition feeding programmes. In Yida (Unity state), a similar survey by ACF revealed 21.8% of malnourished children.

At the time assessments of newly



UNHCR public health officer examines a child at a supplementary feeding programme in Yusuf Batil camp. [Credit: UNHCR/T.Ongaro]

arrived refugee women, children and the elderly, revealed a general poor health status and high levels of malnutrition. Whereas the reasons for flight were premised on aerial bombardment and ground fighting, the inability to plant or harvest crops and the depletion of existing food stocks contributed to the deterioration of refugee's nutrition status. This affected young children and older persons, who are usually the most vulnerable to such shocks. ●

Contributor: E.Fagbohoun

Against the grain of tradition

At 16 years of age, Aida has already turned down three marriage proposals. Her grandmother believes the teenager should already be married with kids.

Aida and her grandmother became separated from the rest of the family when they fled fighting in their village in Blue Nile state.

Alone as a refugee and without the means to support Aida, the grandmother determined that marriage would provide the security her young charge needed.

The teenager would not hear of it. Fortunately, in the months that followed the two were reunited with the rest of the family in Yusuf Batil camp.

"I was so happy to see my parents alive," Aida says. "Plus, my father disagreed with my grandmother on

the subject of my marriage."

Recently Aida completed a month long training programme and went on to be hired as an early childhood development (ECD) instructor in the refugee camp. She earns a monthly stipend which contributes towards her family's income.

Like most refugees, Aida did her primary education in Arabic. Aida is one of 400 refugees who are enrolled in a beginners' English language training course for ECD teachers organized by Windle Trust. The organization is working to improve the proficiency of its refugee trainees to them to implement the education curriculum in English.



Aida goes through the in her English class. [UNHCR/ P. Rulashe]

"It may not be a continuation of my secondary schooling," she says, "but it is contributing to my goal of becoming a teacher.

"My grandmother still thinks I should make myself available for marriage," she adds. "She does not understand what it is I'm looking for." ●

Contributor: P. Rulashe

The plight of returnees at Renk

As Protection Cluster lead and co-lead of the Emergency Returns Sector (with IOM), UNHCR continues to support South Sudanese citizens to return home from Sudan as well as to facilitate their reintegration through protection monitoring and targeted assistance. UNHCR maintains a presence and conducts regular protection monitoring in all four returnee sites in Renk: Mina, Payuer, Abayok and Agan.

An estimated 21,000 returnees are currently residing in Renk, with new arrivals continuing to trickle in. During the week, IOM identified 76 individuals who returned from mainly Sennar state in Sudan.

Renk in Upper Nile state is the northern-most port on the River Nile before it crosses into Sudan. With the volatile security situation in areas along the Sudan-South Sudan border, being the only safe corridor with favourable road conditions makes this an important transit corridor for returnees.

For about half of the returnees in Renk, the lack of reintegration prospects ranks highest as a concern. Many have been stranded for the past year. They are unable to access their intended places of return for reasons of insecurity (Jonglei State), access constraints (Unity State) or delays in land allocation (Maban County, Upper Nile State). They have no land and live in destitution.

The other half are awaiting onward

transportation assistance, and continually express frustration at the uncertainty of planned movements. Follow-up with IOM reveals complexities posed by the returnees' resolute insistence on carrying unlimited volumes of baggage. This constrains available transport capacity, and has resulted in the very slow pace of movement.

UNHCR has been engaging the returnees as well as other stakeholders to resolve the issue. A high powered delegation from Juba visited the returnees last month. It comprised the Minister for Gender and Social Welfare in Central Equatoria, Deputy of RRC South Sudan, Director for RRC Juba, Director general RRC for Upper Nile State, Assistant Director for Repatriation, a Representative from Ministry of Finance Central Equatorial State, and Media.

With the support of UNHCR, IOM and Renk County RRC director, the delegation met with returnees in Mina and Payuer camps. They stressed



UNHCR Protection Associate with a returnee at the UNHCR way station in Malakal. UNHCR has established six such way stations throughout South Sudan which serve as rest stops for returnees who are in transit.

the importance of reducing luggage volume so as to hasten the return movement, since the government has no funding to assist. The returnees agreed to prioritize or sell off excess baggage to facilitate their movement.

Verification was completed during the week of returnees who will soon be assisted to return to Malakal, Bentiu and Maban by road. Trucks arrived in Malakal from Juba and are heading to Renk to facilitate the movement. ●

Contributor: M.Ouma

Effects of inter-communal fighting

The security situation in Jonglei state, particularly Pibor county and surrounding areas, has been tense since the start of military offensives against rebel militia groups at the

beginning of the month.

Information on civilian casualties has been difficult to obtain due to extremely limited humanitarian access to the affected populations.

Still, humanitarian partners have identified child protection issues including unaccompanied/separated children, occupation of schools and destruction of school materials. The protection cluster led by UNHCR and the education cluster led by UNICEF

have agreed to enhance advocacy efforts to redress these concerns and are preparing a position paper.

Meanwhile in Lakes state, a series of violent clashes earlier this year left 25 dead and 24 wounded close to the capital, Rumbek. A number of women and children fled and sought refuge among relatives in other areas. Most of them returned to their homes after the State government deployed the army to maintain peace in conflict-affected areas. ●

Contributors: N.Asaka, J.Wahome]



Women returning to their homes after fleeing inter-communal fighting in Rumbek.



UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

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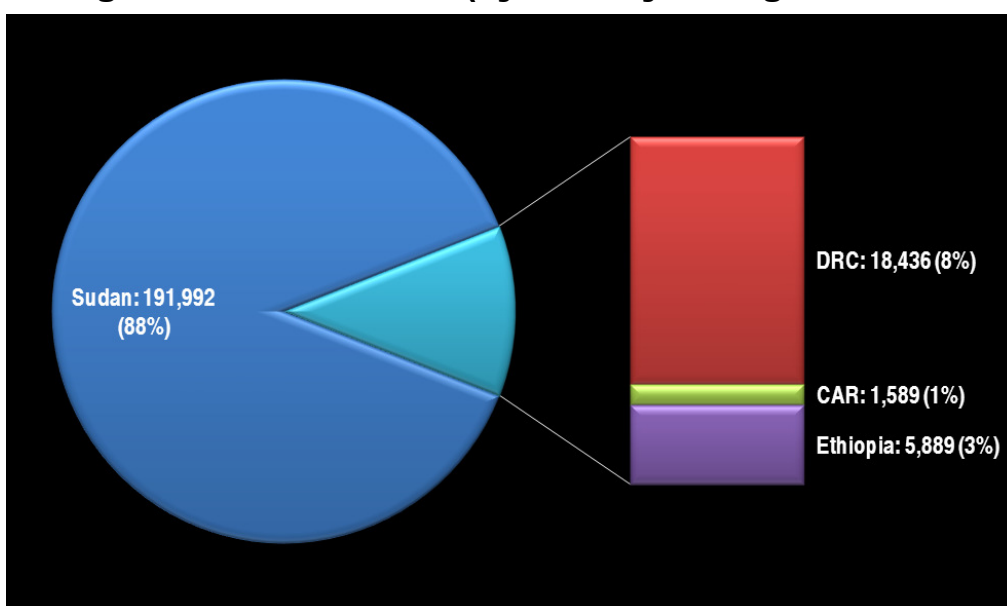


United



USA

Refugees in South Sudan (by country of origin)



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- In 2005, following the historic signing of the CPA, UNHCR embarked on facilitating the voluntary repatriation and reintegration of over 330,000 Sudanese refugees from the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda.
- UNHCR supports the Government to protect and assist refugees from the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia and Sudan.
- The South Sudan Commission for Refugee Affairs (SSCRA), established by Presidential decree in February 2013, is UNHCR's government counterpart on refugee matters.
- UNHCR supports national bodies that engage protection and human rights related activities, and constitutional development, notably the Ministry of Legal Affairs, South Sudan Human Rights Commission and Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs.
- As Protection Cluster lead and co-lead of the Emergency Returns Sector, UNHCR continues to support South Sudanese citizens to return home from Sudan as well as to facilitate their reintegration through protection monitoring and targeted assistance.
- As Protection Cluster lead, UNHCR together with Cluster members collaborate with UNMISS on policy and practice issues related to humanitarian and protection of civilian planning and responses to conflict/disaster induced displacement, along with OCHA and other Clusters.