

Key Points

- Fighting between the SAF and the SPLM-N forces continued in parts of South Kordofan and Blue Nile states.
- The number of refugees from South Kordofan and Blue Nile that have fled to South Sudan and Ethiopia exceeds 213,000 people, according to UNHCR.
- WFP reports that insecurity remains the main risk affecting access to land and markets in South Kordofan and Blue Nile, with substantial increases in sorghum prices in both states.
- In Abyei, the total number of returnees to areas north of the Bahr el Arab/Kiir River is now 10,000 people, according to IOM.
- Approximately 4,500 South Sudanese stranded at the Kosti railway station are awaiting transportation assistance to complete their journey to South Sudan.
- Seasonal floods kill eight people, displace another thousand and kill livestock in North Darfur's Malha locality, according to NGOs on the ground.
- Some 28,000 families have not received rainy season non-food relief supplies or shelter materials due to lack of Government approval to move those supplies from El Obeid to Darfur.

1. South Kordofan and Blue Nile

Security situation and civilian displacement

Fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Sudan People's Liberation Movement - North (SPLM-N) forces continued in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states during the reporting period. According to reports received by the UN, fighting took place in a mountainous area about 15km west of Dilling in South Kordofan on 3 July. On 6 July, it was widely reported in the local media that a convoy with a number of South Kordofan State Government officials travelling to an agricultural project near Kurgul was attacked by SPLM-N forces between Dilling and Kurgul in South Kordofan. According to media reports, seven people were killed, including the head of the South Kordofan Legislative Council and several other officials.

In Blue Nile, the UN received reports of air strikes on 2 July in Yabus, in the southern part of Kurmuk locality. On 3 July, reports were received of armed clashes between SAF and SPLM-N in Deim Mansur area, about 40km south of Kurmuk. On 4 July, according to reports received by the UN, a group of civilians were allegedly attacked by SPLM-N about 15km south of Kurmuk. One civilian was reportedly killed and another seriously injured. On 7 July, aerial bombardments were reported in Deim Mansur, Yabus and Al Kelli, about 80km south of the provincial capital, Ed Damazine.

Return of displaced people

The Government of Sudan's Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) reported that some 3,000 displaced people willing to return from Rashad town to Khordelaba in Rashad locality in South Kordofan are yet to start the movement due to a lack of logistical support. HAC, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Voluntary Return Committee have agreed to conduct a joint verification exercise of the caseload. The Commissioner of Rashad locality urged humanitarian agencies to expedite the verification exercise and provide logistical support to the returnees before the roads become impassable due to the rains.

On 8 July, the Sudanese Media Centre (SMC) website reported – citing HAC – that 80 per cent of displaced people in South Kordofan have returned to their homes. According to SMC, more than 23,000 displaced people have returned to Talodi and El Leri localities, in addition to 10,000 people from Abu Gubeiha and 3,000 from Kalogi.

Food security situation

The UN World Food Programme (WFP) stated in its Sudan Market Monitor June 2012 that all monitored markets in Sudan have witnessed increases in seasonally adjusted prices of local cereals. In Blue Nile, prices for sorghum, for example, have increased by 37 per cent in the second quarter of 2012 compared to the previous quarter, and in South Kordofan by 35 per cent.

In its Sudan Food Security Alert, issued on 5 July, the USAID-funded Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) reported that poor crop production has been exacerbated by continuing limitations on trade, movement, and humanitarian access in SPLM-N areas of Blue Nile and South Kordofan. This severely hindered access to other sources of food (wild foods, market purchases) and income (agricultural labour opportunities, sales of wild foods) as well as limited market supplies, pushing food prices well above average. As a result, the host population in SPLM-N areas of South Kordofan (about 50,000 people) faces food consumption gaps with high or above usual levels of acute malnutrition. Displaced people in SPLM-N areas of South Kordofan (150,000 to 200,000 people) are worse off. They face heavy asset losses, large food consumption gaps, very high levels of acute malnutrition, and excess mortality. Therefore, these areas of South Kordofan are classified as experiencing Emergency levels of food insecurity, which corresponds to the Integrated Food Security Phase (IPC) Classification Phase 4.

Those in SPLM-N-controlled areas of Blue Nile have less limitation on movement and better access to food than in South Kordofan and face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) levels of food insecurity. In both states, displaced households in government-controlled areas have better access to markets, labour opportunities, and humanitarian assistance and therefore these areas are classified as Stressed (IPC Phase 2). Between now and August, food security is expected to deteriorate as food prices peak, food stocks are exhausted or drawn to a minimum among both the displaced people and the host population, and limitations on trade, movement, and humanitarian assistance continue.

Sudanese refugees in South Sudan and Ethiopia

Sudanese refugees from Blue Nile and South Kordofan continue to arrive in South Sudan and Ethiopia. According to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), as of 6 July, there are approximately 176,000 Sudanese refugees from Blue Nile and South Kordofan in South Sudan. In Unity State, there are currently some 64,000 refugees in three locations, namely Yida, Pariang and Nyeel. There are approximately 112,000 Sudanese refugees, mainly from Blue Nile, in camps in South Sudan's Upper Nile State. According to UNHCR, there are some 37,000 Sudanese refugees, mainly from Blue Nile, in Ethiopia. Overall, more than 213,000 refugees from Blue Nile and South Kordofan have sought shelter in camps in South Sudan and Ethiopia since June 2011.

Humanitarian response

Humanitarian organisations in Sudan are still not able to enter SPLM-N-controlled areas as a result of the security situation and government restrictions. As of 8 July, there are 320 national staff of UN agencies and international NGOs, and six international UN staff in government-controlled areas of South Kordofan. In Blue Nile, there are more than 200 national staff of UN agencies and international NGOs, with no international staff present.

Meanwhile, WFP continues to distribute food assistance in parts of South Kordofan. In June, a total of 2,509 metric tonnes (MT) of food for general food distribution were dispatched to different locations in South Kordofan. This includes 2,221 MT of food that has been dispatched to the eastern part of the State, and another 288 MT dispatched to the west of South Kordofan. There is also a stock of 686 MT of food now prepositioned in the Kadugli WFP warehouse. In June, a total of 45,571 people affected by the conflict in South Kordofan received food assistance. This includes 12,110 directly affected people in Talodi; 15,871 directly and indirectly affected people in El Leri; 2,805 directly affected people in Gadir/Kalogi; 5,347 directly affected people in Dilling and 9,438 directly affected people in Alreif Ashargi.

On 8 July, a WFP monitoring team, including two international staff members, were given permission to travel to the eastern part of South Kordofan to start the food distribution in the area.

In addition to the dispatch of food for general distribution, WFP has dispatched one MT of food under the supplementary feeding program to three health centres in Kadugli locality mainly for 239 malnourished children under the age of five. In Dilling, Save the Children-Sweden (SC-S) has started the distribution of 135 MT of food

sent by WFP about three weeks ago under the supplementary feeding program. The distribution will take place in 15 health centres throughout the State. A total of 6,265 people, including 5,436 children and 829 pregnant and lactating women, will receive food aid.

2. Abyei

Returns to areas north of the Bahr el Arab/Kiir River

According to findings of the preliminary assessment carried out by IOM tracking and monitoring teams, an estimated 10,000 people, who had been displaced from Abyei town and surrounding villages in May 2011, have returned to their homes north of the Bahr el Arab/Kiir River since late 2011. The movements intensified during mid-June. The assessment confirmed that a lack of basic services and infrastructure at the final destination is one of the reasons limiting large-scale returns. In some areas, only a part of the family returned to rebuild their houses/shelters or work in their fields, while the rest, particularly the elderly and school-age children stayed behind in the Agok area. For many others insecurity remains a concern, preventing them from returning at this time.

The fifth meeting of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee (AJOC) was held on 5 July in Abyei. The AJOC meeting discussed the terms of reference of the Inter-Governmental Task Force on Humanitarian Assistance, and agreed to send a joint letter to the Presidents of Sudan and South Sudan, bringing to their attention the persistent differences over the modalities for the establishment of the administrative bodies and seeking their guidance on how best to resolve those differences. The next AJOC meeting will be held on 5 August in Abyei.

Humanitarian response

During the reporting period, IOM and the international NGO Caritas distributed non-food items to 15,626 people in Agok and Abyei town. IOM, Caritas and the South Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) also carried out a verification of the RRC list of returnees in Gungbiel, and a total of 319 families have been verified, re-registered and given tokens. Non-Food Items (NFIs) distribution for this caseload has been scheduled for next week.

Over 124,000 displaced people from Abyei and returnees received food rations for June. WFP aims to preposition stocks to cover the July-September food requirements for displaced people/returnees in areas close to Abathok and Agok and July-December requirements for those close to Awal. Access to Awal area is expected to be cut off as the rains continue to intensify. July food distributions are set to commence this week and continue until the third week of July in the mentioned areas, targeting both the new returnees and people still displaced.

WHO, in collaboration with GOAL, conducted health and hygiene promotion in Agok. The six-day campaign included market cleaning, health, sanitation, and hygiene sensitisation and promotion activities in the community.

WES has received funding from UNICEF for the construction of an additional 36 emergency latrine for displaced people in Agok. In addition, Mercy Corps, with support from UNICEF, continued the construction of 11 Temporary Learning Spaces for five basic schools in Agok and surrounding villages.

3. Returns to South Sudan

South Sudanese stranded at the Kosti railway station

An estimated 4,500 people of South Sudanese origin remain stranded at the Kosti railway station awaiting transport to South Sudan. On 28 June, the National IDP Centre reported that the Governor of White Nile State ordered the stranded South Sudanese at the railway station to leave by the end of June (as of writing this report, the authorities had not acted upon this announcement). The South Sudan RRC is still awaiting confirmation on the funding and the official approval of the Government of South Sudan to move these people to South Sudan.

Meanwhile, IOM has started preparations for the UNHCR-supported airlift of 1,370 extremely vulnerable individuals and their escorts. The operation is expected to start in the second half of July and should include

about 655 people from the Khartoum open areas, 300 people from eastern Sudan, and 415 people from South Darfur. The movement of 715 extremely vulnerable individuals and their escorts from eastern Sudan and South Darfur to Khartoum for airlift is pending Government approval.

The Protection Sector reports that South Sudan's RRC confirmed its commitment to transport some 43,000 stranded South Sudanese from the 38 departure points in Khartoum by road to Renk in South Sudan's Upper Nile State. From there, they would be taken by barges to their final destinations. RRC also confirmed that they have finalised all arrangements, including identification of contractors.

Assessment in departure points

The UNHCR and the Governmental Commission for Voluntary and Humanitarian Work (CVHW) led interagency needs assessment of people of South Sudanese origin located in 38 departure points in Khartoum State was conducted in late June. According to the Protection Sector, some departure points have reported suspected cases of measles and acute malnutrition amongst children. There are no health care services provided at those departure points. Assessment teams brought this to the attention of the Ministry of Health (MoH) who are following up the cases of measles. The MoH teams have vaccinated the children at Shajara departure point against measles. In addition, large numbers of separated and unaccompanied children were reported. There were at least 40 unaccompanied and 711 separated children for an estimated population of 10,000.

UN staff member of South Sudanese origin released

In Kassala, a detained UN staff member of South Sudanese origin was released on 4 July, having been detained since 26 April. The released staff member was requested to report daily to the National Security and Intelligence Services (NISS) office in Kassala. In Girba, South Sudanese children are reportedly not allowed to access schools, while in Kassala and Halfa access is possible. The registration exercise of South Sudanese by the immigration department is still continuing in eastern Sudan.

4. Darfur

Security situation

According to reports received by the UN, armed attacks on Government convoys, criminality and insecurity along the major routes in Darfur, including the route between El Fasher and Nyala, continue to affect civilian movements and the transportation of humanitarian supplies. Moreover, worsening road conditions due to heavy rains further affect humanitarian movements.

On 8 July, UNAMID reported that SAF planes bombarded Khatum Jadid village in Tawilla area in North Darfur. Following the bombardments, the international NGO Partner Aid International (PAI) evacuated its eight staff who had been working in the village.

Floods cause loss of life and destroy houses in Malha locality, North Darfur

Local media reported heavy rains in North Darfur's Malha locality in late June. International NGOs and other aid organisations on the ground report that eight people were killed by floods triggered by heavy rains, while 1,000 people were displaced by the floods. The flooding also damaged houses, schools, health facilities and other public buildings. The agencies on the ground also report that some 10,000 head of livestock were lost. The most urgent needs of the affected people are food, non-food relief supplies, shelter and medical assistance. International NGOs and IOM staff on the ground will conduct a rapid assessment of damage and urgent needs to support initial response planning. In addition, sector leads have been requested to mobilise local line ministries to participate in the assessment.

Food insecurity

WFP has shifted from in-kind food aid to commodity vouchers for some of its beneficiaries. According to the WFP Sudan Market Monitor (June 2012), the drop in food aid has resulted in a price increase in sorghum. The price of sorghum has increased by 23 per cent from the first to the second quarter of 2012 in North Darfur. The year on year increase is 81 per cent.

In West Darfur, sorghum prices have increased by 31 per cent in the second quarter of 2012 compared with the first quarter of 2012, leading to a severe impact on food basket cost. June 2012 prices are 100 per cent above the prices of the same time last year.

Rainy season NFIs distribution challenges

Since early April, the Non-Food Items/Emergency Shelter (NFI/ES) Sector has undertaken the rainy season distribution of NFIs and shelter materials to vulnerable households across Darfur. The target has been to reach 80,000 vulnerable families. This far, 52,000 families - 65 per cent of the target group - have received NFIs and shelter materials. The remainder of the target group, some 28,000 families, have not received NFIs or shelter materials as stocks in Darfur are exhausted. These materials are available in UNHCR's El Obeid warehouse, but the UNHCR ES/NFI project has not received authorisation from the Government to the release of these materials although authorisation has now been given for movement of NFIs for distribution in South Kordofan. Darfur has already experienced heavy rains and there are serious concerns about the welfare of the intended beneficiaries. The lack of NFIs and shelter materials in Darfur will also prevent the NFI/ES Sector from responding to any emergencies in the region. Negotiations with the Government are continuing to resolve the situation.

Handover of clinics to Sudan Council of Churches

On 4 July, HAC South Darfur reported that the three suspended clinics of the Sudan Aid NGO, including two clinics in the Bileil IDP camp and one in Al-Cinema area in Nyala, will be handed over to the Sudan Council of Churches. These clinics were closed by HAC South Darfur on 24 April, after Sudan Aid was accused of conducting activities in the state outside of its mandate.

Meanwhile, WFP reports that the traditional leaders of displaced people in the Kalma camp in South Darfur agreed to the WFP re-verification exercise in the camp. According to WFP, Kalma re-verification will commence on 14 July 2012. There have been no food distributions in the camp for more than seven months due to the refusal of IDP leaders to allow the WFP re-verification exercise.

Need for agricultural inputs in the Nertiti locality, Central Darfur

Following an inter agency mission to the Nertiti locality in Jebel Marra region in late June, HAC expressed concerns about the lack of agricultural seeds and inputs to communities in Rokero locality. According to the HAC, no agricultural inputs have been received from the State Ministry of Agriculture (SMoA) or humanitarian organisations due to access challenges to Jebel Marra. The total population in Rokero is estimated to be 180,000 people.