

24 May 2012

Highlights:

- Humanitarian assistance is scaling up to newly arrived returnees in Juba, as part of the emergency response operation to airlift 12,000 South Sudanese from Sudan.
- Food and medical support was provided to an estimated 10,000 Sudanese people who crossed the border into Upper Nile from Sudan's Blue Nile State during the week.
- In Unity State, some 15,000 people were identified as displaced by cattle-raiding in April.

I. Situation overview

Humanitarian organizations are scaling up emergency assistance to newly arrived returnees in Juba, who have been airlifted from Khartoum after been stranded in Sudan's Kosti for many months. Since the response operation began on 14 May, 5,400 returnees have been airlifted and are receiving humanitarian assistance while in transit in Juba. Aid agencies are also focusing efforts on responding to people displaced in Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Warrap and Abyei's Rumamer, following conflict in border areas in March and April. The response is being mobilized to 15,000 people who were displaced by cattle-raiding in Unity's Koch County in April. Refugees continue to spill into Upper Nile and Unity from the conflict in Sudan, with agencies responding to the needs of over 117,000 Sudanese in the two border states. In addition, relief continues to 110,000 people displaced by fighting in Abyei which broke out one year ago.

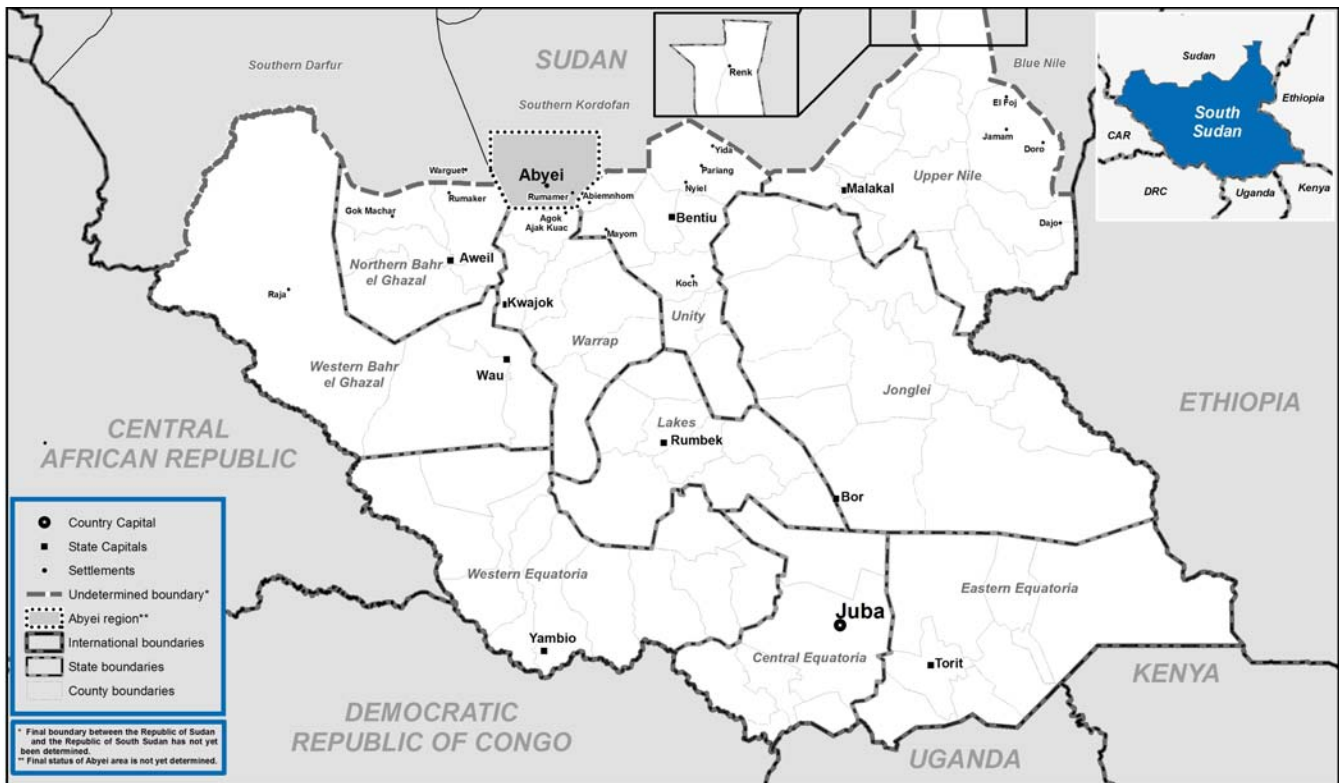
In political developments, high-level negotiations between South Sudan and Sudan will reportedly resume in Addis Ababa next week. Former South African President and African Union mediator Thabo Mbeki was in Juba during the week to advocate for a resumption of negotiations between the two states. Mbeki announced at a press conference that both countries would return to the Ethiopian capital next week to recommence talks. The announcement came despite South Sudan alleging further bombing by Sudan on its territory earlier in the week. The reports have yet to be verified.

II. Humanitarian challenges: needs and response

Humanitarian response continues to close to 10,000 people displaced in Northern Bahr el Ghazal

The security situation in the border area between Northern Bahr el Ghazal and Sudan was tense during the week, as bombing was reported in the disputed Warguet area close to Aweil East on 21 May, according to UN Security. Fears persist of possible further attacks causing displacement. Humanitarian organizations continue to provide assistance to almost 10,000 people displaced in Jach, Gok Machar and Rumaker, following border fighting in April. An inter-agency assessment to Jach carried out from 15-17 May identified close to 3,600 people displaced. The figure was lower than previous estimates which included host communities in need. Assistance continues to those displaced, including the distribution of 60-day food rations, hygiene kits and the replenishment of medical supplies. Vaccination, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) activities are also underway.

The security situation in Rumaker in Aweil East is reported to be tense. An inter-agency assessment to the area identified 2,620 people displaced and 645 in Warlang, close to Rumaker. The immediate needs of the people identified were food, medical support and WASH. One-month food rations and household items have been distributed to those in need in Rumaker, and assistance to people in Warlang will begin shortly. Additional health support is needed as stocks of medical supplies have been exhausted. In Gok Machar, which hosts some 3,000 displaced people, emergency relief continues including WASH, shelter, tents for temporary learning and school supplies. Improved sanitation has been identified as a gap in the response and partners are discussing ways to improve the situation.



Food and other assistance ongoing to over 5,000 people displaced from Abiemnhom

Humanitarian assistance continued to 5,175 conflict-displaced people in the contested Abyei area of Rumamer, and Rumkor, between Agok and Ajak Kuac in Warrap State, from Abiemnhom in Unity State. In response to food shortages in Abiemnhom, partners began distributing one-month food supplies in Rumamer and Rumkor on 18 May. All those in need have been provided with kits containing temporary shelter, blankets, mosquito nets and mats.

People displaced from Abyei rely on aid one year on

The vast majority of the 110,000 people who fled fighting in Abyei that broke out in May 2011 remain displaced and in need of humanitarian assistance. On 17 May, the UN Security Council passed a resolution to extend the mandate of the UN peacekeeping mission, UNISFA, for another six months. The mission was established following the outbreak of fighting in Abyei after Sudanese troops took control of the area. The presence of UNISFA was cited as a precondition for the safe return of the people. However, other barriers to return remain, including the presence of Sudanese security forces in the area. The Security Council resolution called on the Government of Sudan to withdraw all security forces from Abyei, and called for the activation of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism, and the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone between the two states.

Assessment identifies 15,000 people displaced by cattle-raiding in Unity

In Unity State, an inter-agency humanitarian assessment carried out from 17-22 May in Koch County identified some 15,770 people displaced by cattle-raiding which took place in April. The people are displaced to Koch town, Guar, Meer and Ngony. The most urgent needs were identified as security, food, WASH and household items including plastic sheeting for shelter. The assessment was delayed due to insecurity in Unity. Humanitarian partners are mobilizing assistance to be delivered to those in need.

Refugees arriving from Southern Kordofan continue to show signs of malnutrition

Sudanese refugees from Southern Kordofan's Nuba Mountains arriving into Unity State continue to show signs of malnutrition. A lack of food and available humanitarian assistance in their areas of origin are the mostly likely reasons for this. In May, an average 430 Sudanese have arrived each day to Yida, almost 50 per cent more than new arrivals in April according to the UN refugee agency, UNHCR.

More than 35,000 Sudanese are presently receiving humanitarian assistance in Yida. On arrival, refugees are registered and provided with water and high-energy biscuits. Medical screening follows along with the distribution of food rations. Initially the most vulnerable were prioritized, particularly older people, unaccompanied children and female-headed households. Work is ongoing to ensure all refugees has enough supplies to carry them through the rainy season, which lasts until about November. During the last two weeks 2,540 households were provided with plastic sheets, mosquito nets, sleeping mats and blankets.

Humanitarian partners respond to the arrival of 10,000 refugees in Upper Nile

An estimated 10,000 Sudanese refugees crossed the border into Upper Nile from Sudan's Blue Nile State over the week, bringing the total number of refugees in the state to over 80,000 people. The new arrivals were exhausted, having walked for several days after fleeing their villages in the wake of continued fighting, according to UNHCR. Unconfirmed reports indicate that thousands more are on their way to Upper Nile.

The large influx of refugees was expected and humanitarian partners were on hand to provide immediate 5-day food parcels and medical support. Aid agencies are supporting the refugees to move from the border area to a newly established refugee settlement in Yusuf Batil. This is the third refugee site in the state, after Doro and Jammam. The onset of the rainy season presents a challenge to the continued movement of refugees, as road conditions deteriorate. One convoy took four hours to cover a 20 kilometre stretch of road.

The site Yusuf Batil was established to reduce pressure on Jammam's limited water supply, and prevent a possible disease outbreak at the settlement. With the rapidly growing refugee population, availability of clean water remains a critical issue confronting humanitarian actors. 35,000 litres of water are being trucked into Yusuf Batil each day. The relocation of 3,000 refugees from Jammam, to Doro and Yusuf Batil last week eased pressure on the limited water supply in Jammam. To improve the situation, two rigs were airlifted to the site and drilling efforts in the Doro and Jammam settlements continue. In addition, humanitarian partners reached an agreement on laying 14 kilometres of pipeline to guarantee the continued supply of water to Jammam. To address the possible outbreak of water-related disease, medical and other humanitarian actors have drawn up contingency plans, and pre-positioned medical supplies and treatment units.

Rains impede access to people in need

The rainy season, which usually runs from about May to November, restricts access to large parts of South Sudan, exacerbating an already complex and challenging humanitarian setting. The rains impede access to up to 60 per cent of the country, hampering the delivery of food and other essential aid, trapping people in hard-to-reach areas and increasing the hardship. Aid agencies fear that supply routes to refugee sites may be cut off when the rains hit, restricting the delivery of aid such as vital medical relief. Heavy rains also threaten to cause flooding and spread disease. In preparation for the onset of the wet season, humanitarian organizations have pre-positioned lifesaving supplies in multiple hubs throughout South Sudan, in seven core emergency pipelines (food, nutrition, education, non-food items and emergency shelter, emergency medical kits, seeds and tools, and water, sanitation and hygiene supplies).

III. Returns to South Sudan

Airlifting operation of returnees from Khartoum to Juba picks up speed

The airlifting operation of South Sudanese returnees from Khartoum to Juba continued, with 5,400 returnees arriving since the operation began on 14 May. The returnees are part of a group of 12,000 South Sudanese that had been stranded for many months in Sudan's Kosti, and were recently requested by Sudanese authorities to vacate White Nile State. Close to 3,500 returnees arrived in Juba in the last week, with four flights arriving each day since 16 May. Returnees are being hosted in the Juba way station and National Teacher Training Institute transit site while they await luggage and onward transport. Over 6,000 returnees are at the two sites. As of 21 May, IOM had moved over 1,300 returnees from Juba to final destinations since the airlift operation began.

Flights carrying returnees from Upper Nile's Malakal to Greater Bahr el Ghazal, Rumbek and Juba also continued, with 430 transported during the week and 877 moved since the start of the operation on 9 May. Fuel shortages and the limited hours of operation of airstrips in South Sudan delayed some of the

movements, but they are expected to finish shortly. An IOM-supported road movement of returnees from Renk to Malakal took place on 22 May, bringing 73 individuals who will be moved by air to other parts of the country. Spontaneous arrivals in Renk continued in recent weeks at a similar pace to the movements out of Renk, with the transit sites estimated to house some 18,000 returnees. Overall, more than 383,000 South Sudanese have returned from Sudan since the end of October 2010.

Returnee Overview by State*											
State:	Upper Nile	Unity	Warrap	Northern Bahr el Ghazal	Western Bahr el Ghazal	Lakes	Jonglei	Western Equatoria	Central Equatoria	Eastern Equatoria	Total
New Arrivals 16-22 May	241	0	341	43	42	1	40	199	3662	861	5,430
Previous Total	61,729	88,016	34,134	72,234	24,829	17,474	21,423	2,315	43,659	11,892	377,705
Updated Total	61,970	88,016	34,475	72,277	24,871	17,475	21,463	2,514	47,321	12,753	383,135
Type of Returnee											
Government Assisted	25,797	32,462	17,450	24,700	10,537	15,704	16,090	1,792	31,210	10,932	186,674
Spontaneous	21,023	55,554	7,768	46,186	14,334	1,501	5,343	673	16,111	1,821	170,314
Unspecified	15,150	0	9,257	1,391	0	270	30	49	0	0	26,147

*since 30 October 2010. Contains only verified IOM data unless otherwise noted. Figures are as of 22 May 2012.

Humanitarian response scales up at Juba transit site

In Juba, basic services at the newly established National Teacher Training Institute transit centre continued to be scaled up to meet the growing needs of returnees arriving in the organized air movements from Khartoum. The site has the capacity to host 6,500 people. Relief organizations are providing health services, water, sanitation, shelter, lighting and latrine excavation. Of the 30 large communal shelters erected so far, two are operating as mobile health clinics. All pregnant and lactating women are receiving Tetanus vaccinations, and children under five are being screen for malnutrition. Partners report that health needs are being met. Seventy-five latrines have been built and more are under construction. Forty health promoters have been trained. Of those already trained, 30 will be based at latrine and hand washing points to provide hygiene education, and 10 will go on to train people within the site as health promoters. A reported increase in diarrhea last week has now stabilized. In addition to the large communal shelters to accommodate 50 returnees each, 14 long houses which can accommodate 150 returnees and 390 basic family tents for vulnerable families have also been established. Food also continues to be provided to returnees.

In other parts of the country, assistance to help returnees reintegrate into communities also continues. In Aweil in Northern Bahr el Ghazal, land surveying near the Maduany transit site has begun. This will help decongest the Maduany site which currently hosts 1,500 people, and provide a durable solution to returnees there. In Renk, concerns about sanitation levels are being addressed through the construction and rehabilitation of latrines in the Abayok, Mina and Payuer transit sites. Food distribution continued to returnees in the Mina and Payuer sites during the week.

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