

Highlights

- The humanitarian community has agreed to provide support for the transport of up to 5,600 returnees from Kosti to southern Sudan. The movement is due to begin in the coming days.
- Humanitarian partners are mobilising to respond to needs in northern Jonglei state following early February clashes, with assessments conducted in three locations
- Inter-tribal violence continues in southern Sudan, with further attacks reported in Western Equatoria, Unity and Jonglei states.
- New displacement from armed clashes between Government forces and armed groups in North Darfur.
- IOM announces it is no longer able to fulfill its obligations on returns in Darfur.

1. North-South population movements

The cumulative number of returnees returning home from the northern to southern Sudan since end-October 2010 reached over 246,000 people by 22 February, according to IOM. While the pace of new arrivals remained low this week, verification of previously arrived returnees raised the overall figure by an additional 25,000. Despite the comparably low pace of returnees from the North since mid-January, humanitarian partners are now preparing for a potential increase in the coming period.

Issues around land allocation are becoming more acute. Delays in the provision of land and claims to land ownership by host communities at final destination sites have become a major challenge, slowing the transition from the emergency phase of the returns process to the reintegration phase. Delays in land allocation have also prolonged the use of schools as transit sites and may hinder the timely start of the school year in April. Humanitarian partners are working closely with state governments to find alternative options for use as returnee transit sites. Other challenges include the lack of clarity on the status of sites (whether they are transit or final destination) and disputes over whether land allocation should cater for only returnees or for the host community. These issues are more pronounced in areas where the proportion of returnees to the host population is high, such as in Aweil (in Northern Bahr el Ghazal) and Kwajok (in Warrap) towns and many counties of Unity. An informal survey of land allocation challenges was recently conducted by the protection cluster and a second informal survey of use of schools as transit sites is currently underway. Results from the two surveys will be jointly analysed and discussed to identify solutions and recommendations.

Efforts to assist returnees stranded in Kosti

On 16 February, the Government of Southern Sudan's Southern Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (SSRRC) submitted a letter to the UN Deputy Humanitarian Resident Coordinator requesting additional support for the transport of two groups of particularly vulnerable returnees in the North. The request addresses the dire situation of returnees currently stranded in the Kosti way station, some of whom have been waiting for transportation to the South for up to three months – as well as an additional 22,000 people stranded in the open air in Khartoum. Although there are possibly many more southerners in the North wishing to return to the South, these groups have been identified as particularly vulnerable and requiring urgent humanitarian support.

The humanitarian community has announced its willingness to provide support to the transport of 5,600 returnees, including 3,600 children, from Kosti. IOM and UNHCR are working closely with SSRRC and humanitarian partners supporting the transit centre, in the preparations for the departure of the stranded returnees which are due to commence between 1 and 5 March. The returnees will be traveling with barges to Malakal and Juba. IOM has drawn up an agreement with the SSRRC, which will be organising the transportation. The operation is being funded through the Common Humanitarian Fund (Emergency Reserve).

ADRA reported that 5,895 people are still in Kosti transit center as of 23 February.

Returnees overview (Statistical update for 22 February 2010)

According to information from IOM, ADRA, SSRRC, RCSO and WFP, the number of returnees in southern Sudan, Southern Kordofan and the Abyei area since October 2010 is as follows:

Southern Sudan	Southern Kordofan	Abyei Area
246,000	5,210	37,727

2. Southern Sudan

Humanitarian consequences of recent clashes in Jonglei

No new fighting has been reported in Phom el Zeraf in northern Jonglei following the eruption of armed clashes between General Athor's forces and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) on 9-10 February. A one day inter-agency observation assessment to the region was conducted on 15 February and a follow-up humanitarian assessment began on 22 February to identify needs and register those that required direct assistance. Priority will be given to people who lost their homes and those who have had essential belongings looted. Protection partners will also assess needs for psycho-social support.

Separate inter-agency assessments were also conducted in Tonga in Upper Nile State and in Manga in Guit County in Unity State, where groups of displaced reportedly fled during the clashes. In Tonga, the inter-agency team found that most of those displaced to Tonga have now returned to Phom el Zeraf, according to the local authorities in Tonga. The team undertook health interventions, including measles vaccination of children and vaccination against tetanus disease. In addition, nutritional supplements were delivered to the Tonga Primary Health Care Centre to address malnutrition among returnees, those displaced by the fighting and the host community. Preliminary findings from the assessment in Unity State registered that 1,481 people – the majority women and children – had made their way from Fangak. The team identified food, non-food items and health care as the most urgent needs, and partners are now mobilizing to respond.

Inter-agency assessment in Mvolo County, Western Equatoria

Clashes between the Jur and Dinka Atwot tribes in Mvolo County, Western Equatoria, erupted on 9-12 February, following the killing of three men from the Jur tribe and a retaliatory attack on the Dinka Atwot. As of 13 February, more than 20 people had been killed and thousands have been displaced according to reports from the SSRRC.

An interagency assessment was conducted to the area on 16-19 February, visiting Mvolo County centre and Yeri Payam, where a number of people from the Jur tribe are reported to have fled. Needs identified include water, latrines, health services and security. Humanitarian partners are planning interventions in water and health. Additional assessments to further verify needs will be conducted in other areas of Mvolo County, as well as across the border in Lakes State where the presence of IDPs from the Dinka Atwot tribe has been reported.

Conflict incidents have risen in 2011 with onset of the dry season

After a relative lull in violence in the first part of January 2011, reports of conflict incidents with humanitarian impacts (or possible humanitarian impacts) have since increased. Some 60 conflict incidents have been recorded so far this year, including a spate of tribal clashes, LRA attacks and clashes between security forces. Violence has left a reported 390 people killed and 29,000 people displaced. These figures include numbers reported by local authorities following the clashes in New Fangak in early February and are subject to change.

Tensions between Nuer Leik and Nuer Bol tribes in Unity State further increased over the reporting period, following two retaliatory attacks in January in which two people were killed including a Nuer Bol chief. On 16 February, a vehicle carrying the Chief of Leik was shot at between Bentiu and Nhialdiu by suspected Nuer Bol.

The attack left two dead and four injured, though the chief escaped unharmed. UN partners are monitoring the situation.

Suspected incidents committed by the Murle also continued during the past week, with reports that armed Murle youth attacked three villages in Walgak Payam in Akobo, Jonglei State on 16 February. The number of cattle raided is unknown, and there are reports indicating villagers are now pursuing the raiders. A further unconfirmed incident by suspected Murle took place in Pochalla in Jonglei State on 21 February, in which two people were killed during the abduction of a child. The incidents continue a pattern of increased attacks by the Murle since the middle of January 2011, with at least 18 attacks reported, resulting in 33 deaths.

3. Abyei area

The general security situation in Abyei Area has been calm following the violence during the previous reporting period (see OCHA's Humanitarian Weekly Bulletin for the period of 11-17 February). Activities of UN agencies on the ground have proceeded without hindrance.

A joint inter-agency mission was carried out on 22 February in the northwest region of Abyei to assess communities' access to water. The assessment included assessing existing water structures/assets to determine where repairs are required and the areas for prioritised action. The mission carried out assessments in Noong, Alal, Um Khiir, El Shamam and Langar (Goli). It was emphasised to the communities that people and animals' equal access to water was crucial in maintaining harmony in the region. The mission encountered Joint Integrated Units (JIUs) in Alal where the JIU commander instructed his soldiers to stay away from the water points and nomads during the migration so as to prevent any conflicts. A similar mission was carried out in the north-east region of Abyei on 20 February.

The total number of verified returnees to Abyei remains at 37,727, according to WFP and the UN Resident Coordinator's Support Office (RCSO). Following the arrival of these returnees, various sectors have scaled up provision of basic services, according to RCSO.

4. Darfur

New displacement from armed clashes in North Darfur

Armed clashes between Government forces and armed movements have continued in North Darfur. Aerial bombardments by Government forces have been reported by UNAMID, approximately 30 km north of Shangil Tobaya. A UNAMID verification mission headed for Wadi Mura was unable to proceed due to the continued clashes. New displacements have been reported in many areas and new IDPs are said to be either on their way to Zamzam, Tawilla, and Shangil Tobaya or have gone deeper into the mountains. Reports of these clashes have been received from people fleeing these areas who have managed to reach some of the main IDP camps. Humanitarian organisations remain very concerned about the situation of civilians in these areas. Humanitarian agencies have been liaising with UNAMID in an attempt to gain access but a follow-up humanitarian assessment mission in these areas is yet to take place due to the ongoing military operations. UNAMID has had limited access to these areas and has reported the presence of many UXOs. Medical clinics are operational in Shangil Tobaya, Tawilla, and Kaguro, but all other health clinics between Tawilla and Shangil Tobaya remain closed.

Displacement from Khor Abeche

As of 23 February, the number of IDPs from Khor Abeche who have arrived in Dereige IDP Camp in south Darfur stands at an estimated 2,500 people. World Vision International (WVI) and the Sudanese Red Crescent Society (SRCS) are verifying the new arrivals. There is a concern about land capacity as well as water and sanitation in Dereige camp due to the increasing number of new arrivals. Mercy Corps (MC) Scotland has started providing water to the new arrivals and constructing household and communal latrines. Most of the new arrivals received food in Khor Abeche two weeks ago, except those who arrived from Shangil Tobaya. UNICEF will assess the nutrition status of the children of the new arrivals.

Registration and verification of new displacements in Zamzam camp

According to the Omdas' registration list, between 26 December and 12 February, new IDPs totalling 13,334 people have arrived in both the old and new Zamzam IDP camps in North Darfur. Out of the total number of new IDPs, 4,425 people have so far been verified by IOM and have received Non-Food Items and Emergency Shelter (NFI/ES). These newly displaced people arrived from a variety of locations, including East Jebel Marra, Shangil Tobaya (and surrounding villages of Wadi Mura, Tabaldia, Um Hatab, Hillat, Jarir, and Jebel Herais Kadarig), Thabit (and surrounding villages of Um Gafara, Um Sayala, Tukumare, and Kono), Dar El Salaam, El Beida, and from Khor Abeche. The majority of the new IDPs are women, children, and elderly men.

Shangil Tobaya

IDPs continue to leave Shangil Tobaya for Zamzam IDP Camp and other areas in El Fasher town and Nyala, due to insecurity in Shangil Tobaya. The number of IDPs still staying outside the UNAMID Team Site has reduced significantly. From nearly 10,000 people at the end of January, it is estimated that about 500 people (mainly women, children, elderly men, and young boys) remain in the area. Schools and markets remain closed.

Problems of humanitarian access (IOM, MDM and CRS)

IOM has informed the Government and the Humanitarian Coordinator that it is no longer able to fulfill its obligations on returns in Darfur according to its Memorandum of Understanding of 2004 and the terms of reference of the Joint Verification Mechanism, because of the expulsion of two staff members, denial of stay permits, and the rejection or non-issuance of visas for IOM staff.

The Humanitarian Country Team is considering how to address the gap that will be left by Medecins du Monde (MDM) in Eastern Jebel Marra, following the decision by the Governor of South Darfur to expel the organisation. Meanwhile, efforts are continuing to be made to enable CRS to return to West Darfur to continue its humanitarian activities there.

Return villages in Kass

On 20-22 February an inter-agency needs assessment mission was conducted in eight return villages in Kass, south Darfur, which include Tabafito, Dawis, Limo, Kilmo, Talha-elbeyda, Hashaba, Nyama and El Hileila. OCHA, IOM, UNICEF, WFP, UNHCR, UNDP, WHO, CIS, WVI, Tearfund, the Ministries of Health, and Education and four National NGOs participated in the mission. According to the community leaders in the villages, the return of the IDPs from Kass area to the villages has been motivated by improving security situation and cultivation opportunities. The priority needs of the returnees include water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), health and education. The inter-agency mission recommended further verification of the number of the returnees to their villages as well as humanitarian intervention in terms of water, education, health and livelihoods.

A Turkish NGO "Kimse-Yok-Mu", which has been in south Darfur since 2007 and is currently providing WASH, education, health and livelihood activities (agriculture and income generation) in Shange and Kukuja villages (approximately 20 km north of Nyala) has informed OCHA that it has shifted its focus on to return assistance and support to the voluntary return population. The NGO is planning to extend its services to other return villages in Kass.

5. Humanitarian financing

The Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF) allocation process is near completion with a nominal amount of US\$115 million pledged for the first round in 2011. The CHF Advisory Review Groups (ARG) have reviewed ten sectors for northern Sudan and eleven sectors in southern Sudan. Reviewed projects are now being recommended for the Humanitarian Coordinator's final approval and disbursements will be made within two weeks of his approval.