

This report is produced by OCHA in collaboration with humanitarian partners. It was issued by OCHA Khartoum. It covers the period from 11 to 17 February 2011. The next report will be issued on or around 25 February.

Highlights

- The 315 people who fled violence in Abyei town and who sought refuge in the UNMIS compound on 12 February have now returned to their homes and the situation in Abyei is back to normal.
- The Governor of South Darfur announced the expulsion of an NGO, Medecins du Monde (MDM) from South Darfur.
- Catholic Relief Services (CRS), which is WFP's main implementing partner in West Darfur, has been unable to resume its activities in West Darfur and this may have serious consequences for the food distribution programme for 600,000 people
- With fighting ongoing in parts of Darfur, new IDPs have arrived in Zamzam camp and other locations
- The humanitarian impact of fighting in northern Jonglei State on 9 and 10 February remains unclear, with reports from the authorities that the number of dead and wounded is in the hundreds.
- Mounting tribal tensions and cattle raiding incidents have been reported in parts of Jonglei, Warrap and Western Equatoria states.
- Plans are being drawn up to assist the Southern Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (SSRRC) with the onward transportation of over 5,500 returnees, many of whom have been stranded in Kosti transit centre for over a month.

1. North-South population movements

The cumulative number of returnees since end-October 2010 reached over 219,000 people by 15 February, according to IOM. Compared to early January, the pace of returns from northern to southern Sudan has remained at a reduced level, although several thousand southerners continue to arrive each week. There are expectations that the pace of returns could increase once the Government secures funding and the safe passage of returnees through Southern Kordofan is guaranteed.

On 9 February, the Federal Minister for Humanitarian Affairs and the SPLM Ministerial caucus in Khartoum formally requested the UN to provide transport assistance for the remaining Southerners in Northern Sudan who wish to return to Southern Sudan. Following the request, the Humanitarian Coordinator announced that he would move immediately to assist in relieving the blockage of over 5,000 people at the Kosti transit centre. On 11 February, IOM received a letter from the Southern Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (SSRRC) formally requesting it to provide transport assistance for 27,000 returnees (22,000 'in the open air' in Khartoum plus 5,000 in Kosti). Among those waiting in Kosti are over 3,400 children. The transit centre is over-crowded, having been designed to support 800 persons. IOM and UNHCR, who jointly lead the Returns Sector in northern Sudan, are working with the SSRRC on arrangements to expedite the onward transportation of those currently in the Kosti transit centre.

In southern Sudan, state teams are undertaking planning to ensure a clear, consistent and principled response to new returns, with priorities including identifying alternative transit sites to schools where many returnees currently stay. Both the approach of the start of the school year and the rainy season in April place urgency on increasing the rate of land allocation. UN Agencies and NGOs are supporting State authorities to promote rapid reintegration in areas of resettlement.

The effect of recent fighting in Jonglei on returnees recently settled in the area is not yet known. As of 15 February, assessments to establish needs of all affected populations were being undertaken in accessible areas.

Returnees overview (Statistical update for 16 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
219,184	5,210	37,727

2. Southern Sudan

Violence erupts in northern Jonglei

In a clear breach to the ceasefire agreement signed in Juba on 5 January between SPLA and renegade General George Athor, armed clashes erupted in and around Phom-el Zeraf (New Fangak) on 9-10 February. The exact number of casualties resulting from the recent upsurge in fighting remains unconfirmed. However, reports from state authorities indicate that the number of killed and wounded is in the hundreds. Widespread looting of property during the fighting has also been reported. The situation remains volatile and there were unconfirmed reports of renewed fighting on 14 February in Diel and Atar villages in Canal County. Due to the instability in the area, on 15 February two International NGOs working on the kala-azar response have relocated their staff from Jiech and Pagil centres, ranked respectively 5th and 6th in terms of total number of patients admitted in 2010. Part of the staff in Old Fangak requested relocation on the same day.

Humanitarian partners have begun mobilising to respond to humanitarian impact, but information remains scarce due to difficulties in access and a lack of partners on the ground, particularly in Phom-el Zeraf. Initial reports estimate that approximately 400 people, including many of those wounded by the fighting in Phom-el Zeraf, crossed the river to Tonga, in Upper Nile State, to seek safety and medical treatment. The wounded were initially treated in the Ministry of Health (MoH) facility in Tonga before being evacuated by UNMIS to Malakal. An inter-agency mission went to Tonga on 14 February to assess the situation of the displaced and to bring additional medical supplies to restock the MoH facility there. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), MSF-Holland and MoH are working together in Malakal hospital to treat people wounded by the fighting. Humanitarian agencies reported on 12 February that some 70 people have been admitted from the clashes in Malakal hospital. The patients are a mix of civilian and combatants. UNMIS has evacuated wounded from Tonga to Malakal by both helicopter and road. On 16 February, it was verified that there were no more seriously wounded at the health post in Phom-el Zeraf.

Humanitarian actors are also following up on reports that recent returnees to the area have fled to Guit County in Unity State during the fighting and a rapid assessment to establish the veracity of these reports started on 16 February. Other reports of displacement continue to emerge and will be verified by humanitarian agencies as security conditions permit. Interventions south of the river in Fangak County will be more difficult because the area is still considered by the UN security system at security level 3 (armed escort required) or 4 (no go area). Assessments and response will be possible only when the security level is downgraded.

Movement of Joint Integrated Unit in Upper Nile State

The security situation in Upper Nile has calmed down following fighting between 3 and 5 February within the Joint Integrated Unit of Sudan Armed Forces (JIU SAF) in Malakal and outlying counties. The incidents prompted relocation of some humanitarian staff and temporary suspension of assistance although response has since resumed in Malakal. No large population movements were reported as a result of the infighting. On 8 February, UNDSS and the military confirmed the departure of JIU SAF from Malakal to the North.

Tribal clashes reported from several areas

Inter-tribal tensions continue to rise in several areas in the dry season, with particular concerns over incidents in Jonglei State. UNMIS Civil Affairs has reported mounting tensions between Lou Nuer and Murle in Jonglei and the County Commissioner of Akobo reported 6,000 cattle have recently been raided by the Murle. Of the tribal incidents recorded by OCHA in January this year, half reportedly took place in Jonglei. Furthermore, between 26 January and 6 February there were reports of more than 10 attacks. The attacks are a cause for concern as this is a similar pattern as the early violence which preceded the Jonglei crisis in 2009.

Tribal clashes have also been reported in other states, including on 10 February when Nuer cattle raiders from Unity State attacked areas in Twic County in Warrap, according to the SSRRC. According to unconfirmed reports, the attack left seven people dead and looting of livestock was also reported. Tribal fighting has also been reported between the Jur and Dinka Atwot tribes in Mvolo County in Western Equatoria on 9-10 and 12 February. The clashes reportedly began with the killing of a man from the Jur tribe and escalated with a retaliatory attack on the Dinka Atwot. As of 13 February, more than 20 people had been killed and more than 3,000 people were displaced. Police have been deployed to the area to control the situation. A humanitarian assessment mission is ongoing from 16 to 19 February.

3. Abyei area

On 12 February, an outbreak of violence in the market in Abyei town created panic amongst the residents. According to local authorities in Abyei, the shooting started when a JIU SAF soldier based in Dokura (6km north of Abyei town) came to the market with his weapon, which is against JIU policy. When approached and challenged by the police, the JIU soldier shot at the police who returned fire. According to UNDSS, residents opposed to the JIU deployment mobilised the community and started attacking northern and Darfuri traders in the market.

Following the attacks, some 300 men, 11 women and 4 children took refuge within the UNMIS Abyei compound. Zambian and Indian UNMIS contingents provided the displaced with tents and security. UN staff provided blankets for the women and children. Some of those seeking refuge who had sustained minor injuries received first aid treatment at the UNMIS clinic.

As of 16 February, the situation in Abyei town is back to normal, according to UNMIS. All traders who sought refuge from the angry mob in the UNMIS camp had left the camp by 16 February. The Abyei market is up and running again.

The total verified number of returnees to Abyei now stands at 37,727 people, according to WFP.

4. Darfur

IDPs in Abu Zerega and Tawilla

On 9 February, agencies received four Omdas from Abu Zerega who reported the arrival of new displaced persons from Dar El Salaam, Shangil Tobay, Hashaba, Dali, Khor Abeche, and Tabit area. The IDPs are said to have arrived at the end of January and chose to stay in Abu Zerega (as opposed to Zamzam and Shangil Tobaya) due to the availability of water and pasture for livestock there. It was reported that Non-Food Items (NFI)/shelter and food were the priority needs of the new IDPs, whose number is estimated to be about 3,000 – 4,000 people. The Omdas are to register the new arrivals and submit the list to AHA NGO as soon as possible.

According to Partner Aid International (PAI), six health clinics operated by international NGOs in rural Tawilla (catchment population 71,101 people) and rural Dar El Salaam (catchment population 24,100 people) have remained closed due to military operations in those areas. NGOs have not received clearance to access the health clinics since January 2011.

In addition, OCHA has received an update from the Omda of Tawilla IDPs regarding new IDPs in the area, indicating that the total number of new arrivals is 416 people, including 296 IDPs in the Dali camp, and 120 IDPs in the Argo camp. The IDPs have been arriving since 26 January and are from Tabit and Tukumare. OCHA is planning an assessment mission to Tawilla on 22 February.

Protection and security in Dar El Salam and Shangil Tobaya

An OCHA-led inter-agency mission to Dar El Salam could not be carried out as planned on 12 February due to security-related constraints and the mission has been rescheduled for 17 February. According to the local community leaders in Dar El Salam, they have 4,732 new arrivals of IDPs from over 26 villages, who have not yet received any humanitarian assistance.

Protection and security remain a major concern in the Shangil Tobaya area, according to agencies in North Darfur. Displaced people are reportedly leaving the area and are heading to El Fasher, Zamzam IDP camp and Nyala.

Access to Zamzam camp

On 17 February, the El Fasher - Zamzam - Nyala road was closed due to military operations taking place in Tukumare, Tabit, and surrounding areas. As a consequence, international NGOs were not allowed to access the Zamzam IDP camp. Health clinics and schools in the camp have remained closed for two days. OCHA is following up the issue with HAC.

OCHA has been informed that the health clinic in Gallab (about 15km southwest of El Fasher), which previously had been run by Darfur Peace and Development Organisation, a national NGO, has been closed due to capacity and funding problems. The local NGO took over the clinic from Malteser International in July/August 2010 and has been serving 13,363 people. WHO and OCHA have discussed the matter and will engage the State MOH on the issue.

CRS and MDM

On 14 February, the Governor of South Darfur, Abdel Hamid Kasha, announced that he was expelling the French NGO Medecins du Monde (MDM) from the state, accusing it of spying on the government and supporting rebels (SLA/AW). Security officials arrested 13 Sudanese staff members of MDM on 10 February, later releasing all but two, who are still detained. MDM has asked for their detained staff members to have access to a lawyer. Two international staff members who were in Nyala have now left South Darfur.

The Humanitarian Coordinator advocated strongly for issues related to MDM to be resolved through the consultative mechanism that was established with the Government for this purpose. The Humanitarian Coordinator continues to follow the case closely, with support from OCHA, and every effort is being made to resolve the case and to ensure that any decisions regarding MDM staff are taken on the basis of clear evidence and in consultation with all concerned partners.

Meanwhile, the issue of Catholic Relief Services (CRS) presence in West Darfur remains unresolved. With CRS, WFP's main implementing partner on the ground, still unable to resume its activities, this may have serious consequences for the food distribution programme for 600,000 people.

Lack of medicine in Western Jebel Mara

Several local sources have confirmed a critical shortage of drugs in a number of primary health facilities in Western Jebel Mara, including Kutrum, Kurifal, Golo, and Kati. All of these health facilities are located in territory controlled by SLA/AW. Altogether, more than 3,300 households (approximately 16,500 people) are affected by the shortage. The shortage is due to a combination of restricted access and absence of implementing medical partners.

Voluntary returns mechanism for North Darfur

The Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) this week presented a timeframe for voluntary returns in Darfur. According to this timeframe, the exercise is to start within two to three weeks and is to be finalised before the start of the rainy season in June.

In North Darfur, HAC organised a meeting on 9 February with the humanitarian community to discuss the recently issued decree by the Governor to establish a committee for voluntary returns. The committee named “Voluntary Return Implementation Mechanism for IDPs and Refugees in the State” comprises UN agencies, government ministries, security bodies, international NGOs, and representatives of Abu Shock, Al-Salam and Zamzam IDPs camp return committees. The committee, to be chaired by HAC, will oversee the implementation of decisions and instructions of the High Committee and the Voluntary Return Technical Committee, direct supervision of the voluntary returns operations, registration, arrangement and organisation of the return of displaced persons and refugees from camps to their areas or origin. HAC will form committees for the implementation of voluntary returns in camps consisting of the camp manager, Omdas and Sheikhs. The return process should start in two to three weeks and be finalised before the rainy season commences in June, according to HAC.

5. Contacts

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