

7 January 2018

Last group of Sudanese refugees return to South Darfur from CAR

A total of 1,494 individuals returned to their home villages in Dafag, South Darfur, ending 10 years of asylum in the Central African Republic (CAR).

The voluntary repatriation of Sudanese refugees from Pladama Ouaka refugee camp in Bambari, CAR to Dafag, South Darfur was concluded on 5 January, with 1,494 individuals returned to their home villages in Dafag, ending 10 years of asylum in CAR. Their voluntary repatriation was facilitated by UNHCR and the Governments of Sudan and CAR through 66 UNHCR chartered flights that began returning refugees to South Darfur on 12 December 2017.

The refugees had fled from South Darfur to CAR in 2007 during the conflict between Sudanese forces and armed groups. In late November 2017, the refugees expressed their intention to return to Sudan, following improvements in the security situation and the disarmament of armed groups in their home villages. UNHCR worked closely with the Governments of Sudan and CAR to assist those willing to return with air and land transportation, and through the provision of return packages to support their reintegration in Sudan.

Returnees have been provided land plots, non-food items (NFIs) and cash grants for shelter materials. WFP is also providing a 2-month food ration. Local authorities have committed to providing the returnees with access to land for farming.

UNHCR and COR are working closely with the State Ministry of Health (SMoH), local authorities and other partners [including UNICEF, UNAMID, IOM, CARE International Switzerland (CIS) and Norwegian Church Aid (NCA)] to enhance services in the Dafag area. The Government of Sudan has pledged to implement international standards governing refugee returns, including the benefit of amnesties. UNHCR will continue to monitor the returnees and their situation in Dafag to ensure a secure and inclusive reintegration process.

There are 194 Sudanese refugees (70 families) who have opted to remain in CAR. UNHCR is working with the Government of CAR and the refugees to develop a local integration strategy to ensure that Sudanese refugees continue to benefit from international protection and are able to rebuild their lives in CAR in safety and with dignity.



A Sudanese woman and her baby arrive at Dafag, South Darfur from CAR. Osman,E/UNHCR/January 2018.

Over 900 Chadian refugees living in Sudan have returned to Chad

The voluntary repatriation of Chadian refugees in Central Darfur is ongoing.

A third convoy left Um Shalaya refugee camp in Central Darfur on 28 December 2017, transporting 339 Chadian refugees to Moudeina, in Sila region of Eastern Chad. Since the return operation began on 18 December 2017, 944 Chadian refugees have returned to Moudeina so far via three convoys.

The voluntary repatriation process is ongoing and will continue in 2018. By April, it is expected that up to 4,000 refugees will have returned to Chad, after seeking refuge in Darfur for more than 10 years. Since the outbreak of violence in Chad from 2005 to 2007, UNHCR and partners have worked with the Government of Sudan to provide Chadian refugees with protection and assistance, including the establishment of two refugee camps in Central Darfur.

The voluntary repatriation of Chadian refugees follows the signing of a tri-partite agreement in May 2017 between UNHCR and the Governments of Sudan and Chad, outlining key considerations for return. Nearly half of Chadian refugees in Darfur have expressed their willingness to return to Chad. Refugees who chose to remain in Darfur will continue to benefit from the principles of international protection.



Trucks loaded with Chadian refugees' possessions prepare to leave Um Shalaya refugee camp in Central Darfur for Moudeina, Chad. Akbari, AS/UNHCR/December 2017.

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