

**Background and methodology**

From November 2017 to October 2019, UNHCR estimates some 219,720 South Sudanese refugees have spontaneously returned to South Sudan. To learn more about the challenges they face and their plans for the future, UNHCR conducts an in-depth, household-level survey of returnees across the country bi-monthly.

UNHCR collects information about returns through a variety of sources, such as key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and partner reports. UNHCR then works with South Sudan's Relief and Rehabilitation Commission and NGO partners to validate the reports by interviewing randomly selected households in identified areas of return. Data for this assessment was collected from **August to September 2019**, during which **894 households (5,665 individuals)** were interviewed in high return locations in Central Equatoria, Jonglei, Northern Bahr El Ghazal, Unity, Upper Nile, Warrap, Western Bahr El Ghazal and Western Equatoria.

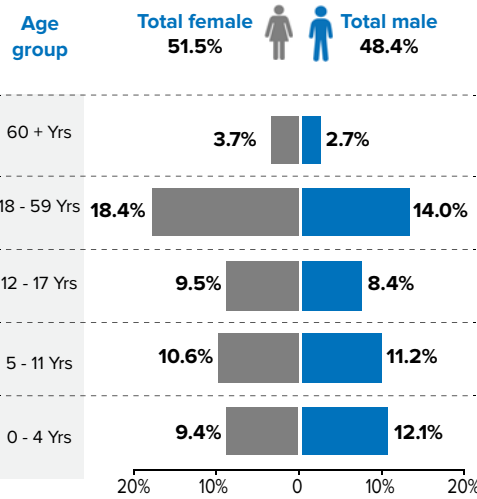
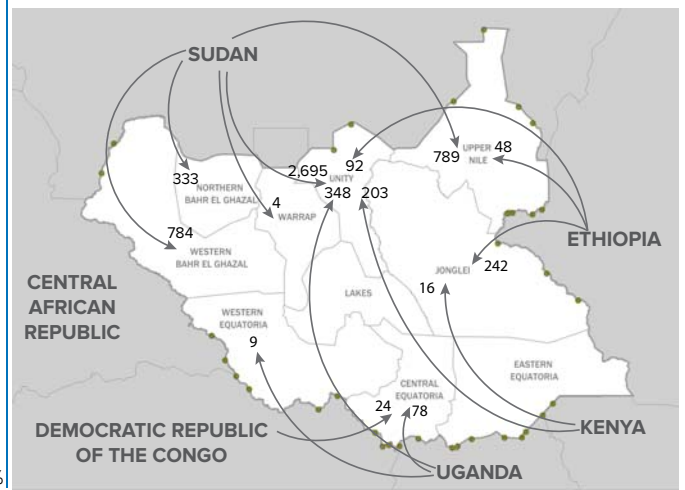
**Spontaneous Returnees**

**Female-headed household**

**63%**
**Child-headed household**

**0.1%**
**HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD PROFILE**
**Respondents by gender**


Age group	Gender	Total %
5 - 17 Yrs	Male	0.1%
18 - 59 Yrs	Female	95.5%
60 + Yrs	Female	4.3%

**Individual age gender disaggregation**

**MOVEMENT FLOW**

**VULNERABLE CASES**

Overall **10%** of individuals were identified as vulnerable during the reporting period


 Elderly at risk  
**139**

 Persons with a disability  
**120**

 Children at risk  
**83**

 Women at risk  
**74**

 Unaccompanied children  
**72**

 Pregnant women  
**38**
**REASONS FOR RETURN**
**PUSH FACTORS**

- Insufficient employment and livelihood opportunities in country of asylum **40%**
- Insufficient access to basic services in country of asylum **32%**
- Insecurity in country of asylum **27%**

**PULL FACTORS**

- Reunite with family members **44%**
- Perceived improvement in security situation in South Sudan **43%**
- Perceived improvement availability of services in South Sudan **13%**

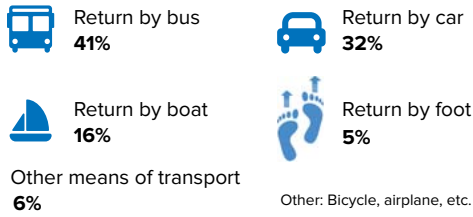
**Push factors** discourage South Sudan nationals from staying in the country of asylum.

**Pull factors** encourage South Sudan nationals to return to their country of origin.

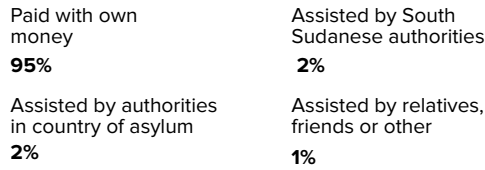
**TRAVEL INFORMATION**



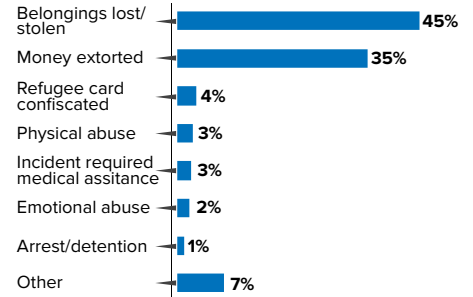
**Mode of transport**



**Mode of payment**



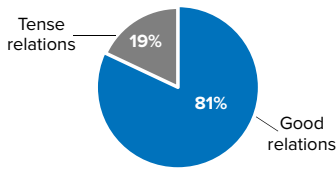
**PROTECTION INCIDENTS DURING TRAVEL**



**RELATIONSHIP WITH COMMUNITIES**



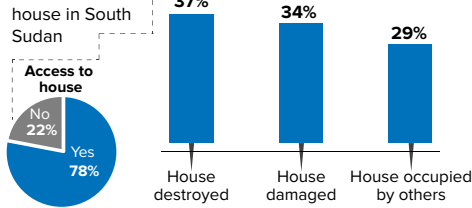
Overall **94%** individuals feel safe in the current location



**HOUSING IN SOUTH SUDAN**



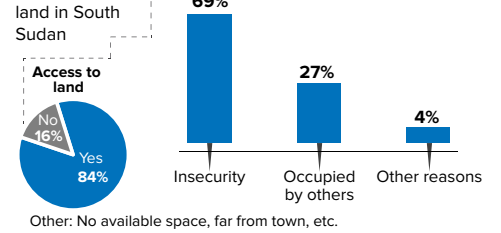
Overall **66%** of returnees own a house in South Sudan



**LAND IN SOUTH SUDAN**



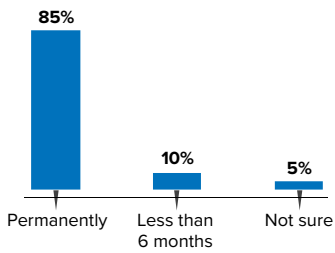
Overall **85%** of returnees own land in South Sudan



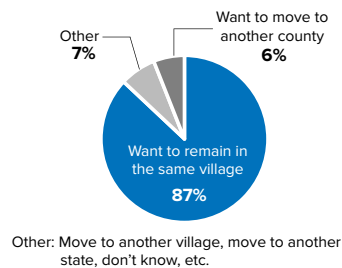
**FUTURE PLANS**



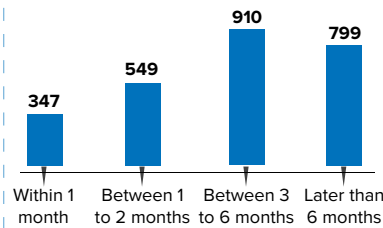
**Intended return duration**



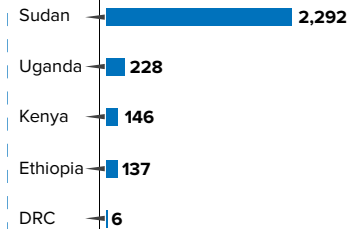
**Intention of permanent returnees**



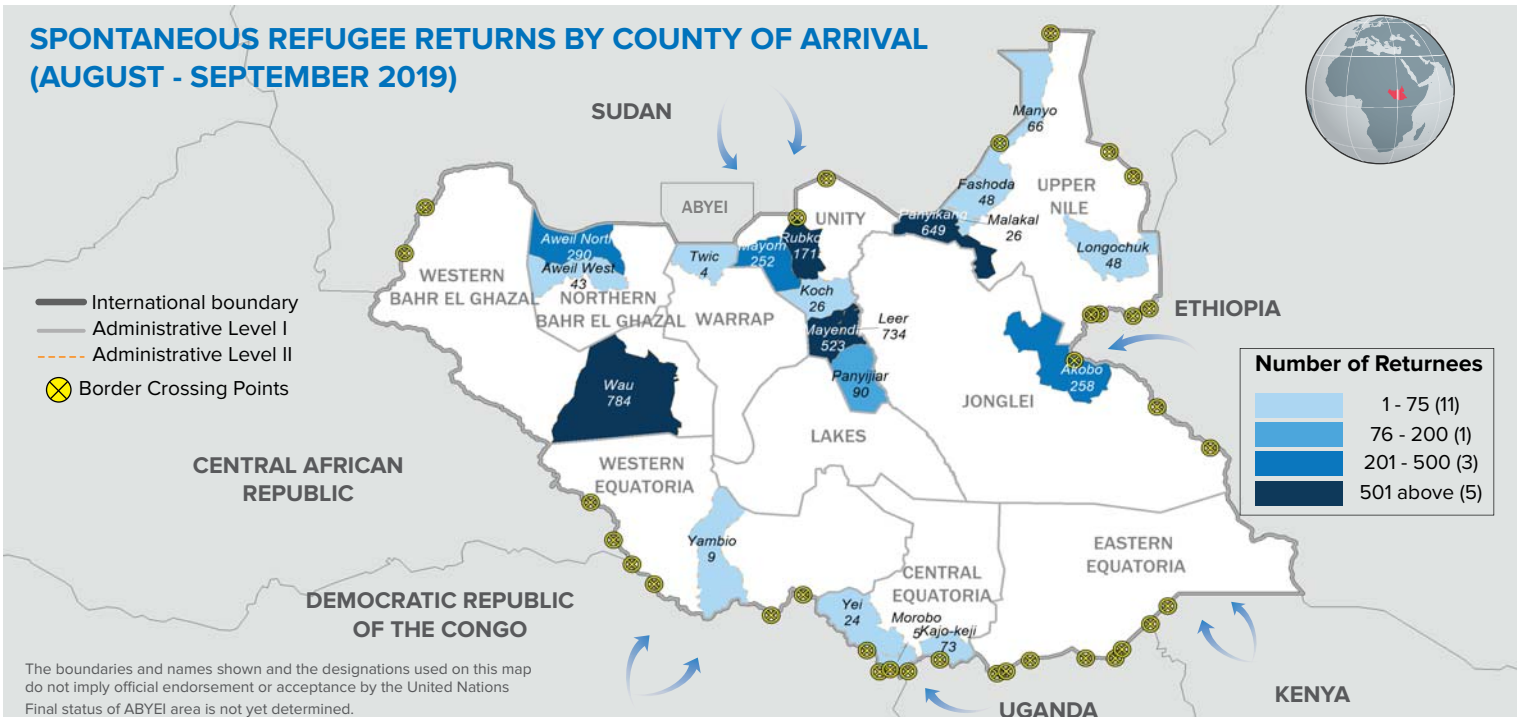
**Return plan for immediate family members**



**Immediate family members remaining in country of asylum**



**SPONTANEOUS REFUGEE RETURNS BY COUNTY OF ARRIVAL (AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2019)**



### Brief explanation:

*Findings of periodic household-level survey (August-September 2019) of South Sudanese refugees who returned to South Sudan in a self-organised manner*

UNHCR, in coordination with South Sudan's Commission for Relief and Rehabilitation and NGO partners, conducted a household survey of spontaneous refugee returnees who arrived between August and September 2019. In total, 894 households (5,665 individuals) were interviewed in high-return areas of the Central Equatoria, Unity, Warrap, Jonglei, Upper Nile and Bahr El Ghazal regions. This survey is conducted on a bi-monthly basis.

### Key findings include:

- The **highest number** of spontaneous refugee returnees surveyed **came from Sudan** (4,605), followed by Uganda (435).
- A majority (83%) were women and children, with 63% being female headed households.
- Most (41%) of the **refugee returnees came by bus**, while 32% car pooled or drove a private car, and 16% came by bus. Most paid for the journey with their own money, but some reported receiving **assistance from authorities** in countries of asylum and in South Sudan.
- The **overwhelming majority (85%)** of respondents said they **intended to stay permanently**.

#### *Main reasons for return included:*

1. Reunite with family members
  2. Improvement of security situation in South Sudan
  3. Insufficient employment and livelihood opportunities in country of asylum
  4. Insufficient access to basic services in country of asylum
  5. Insecurity in country of asylum
- **Eighty-seven percent** of refugee returnees said they intended to remain in the village to which they returned, while only 6 percent expressed desire to move to a different county.
  - **Ninety-four percent** of surveyed refugee returnees said they **feel safe** in their current location and 81% said that they have **good relationship with the host community**.
  - Most (85%) reported owning a house and/or land in South Sudan, but **22% and 16%**, respectively, **do not have access to it** for various reasons.
  - **Sixty-six percent** of refugee returnees have left **immediate family members in the country of asylum**; however, most said their family members planned to meet them in South Sudan within one to six months.

### Contributing partners

RRC	Office of Relief and Rehabilitation Commission, Government of Sudan
ROSS	Relief Organization for South Sudan
WDG	Women Development Group
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
HRSS	Hope Restoration South Sudan
HDC	Humanitarian Development Consortium
UMCOR	United Methodist Committee on Relief
CARE	Care International
ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency

**UNHCR Representation in South Sudan, 12 November 2019**