



375,400

Cumulative number of reported refugee returnees since Nov 2017, of which 241,390 have returned following the signing of the revitalized peace agreement in October 2018.



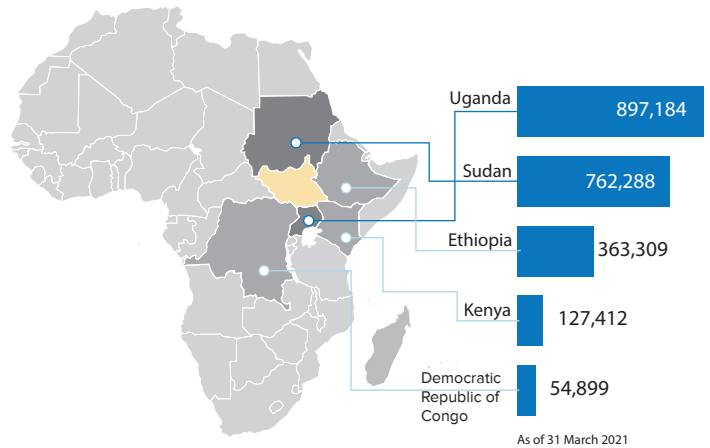
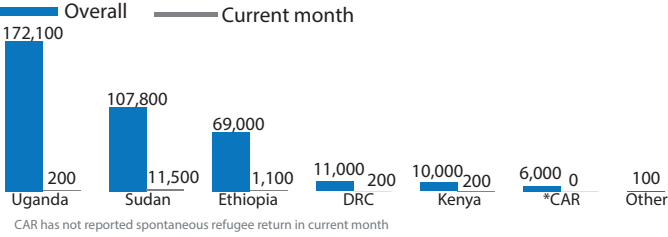
2.2 million refugees

South Sudanese Refugees in the region as of 31st March 2021

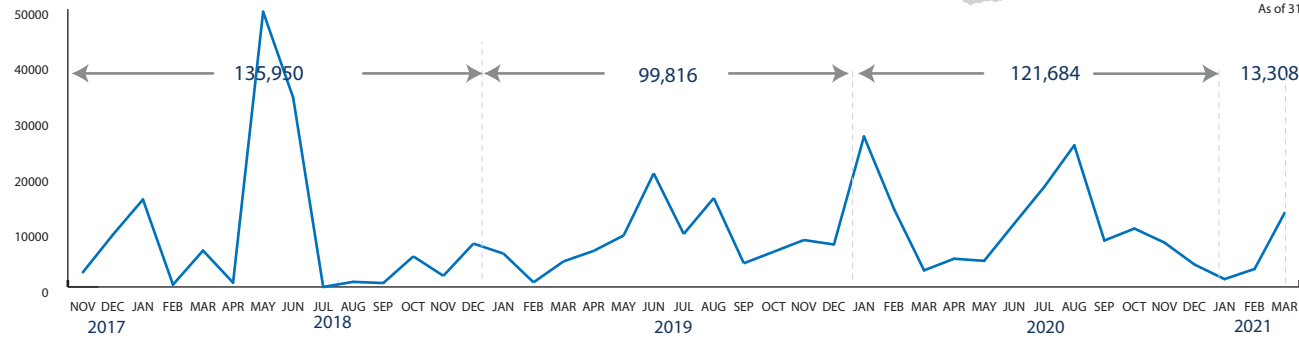
UNHCR and South Sudan's Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) are pleased to share this monthly update on spontaneous South Sudanese refugee returnees.

The dashboard highlights cross border refugee movements between neighbouring countries and South Sudan during March 2021.

Spontaneous refugee returnees by Country of Asylum

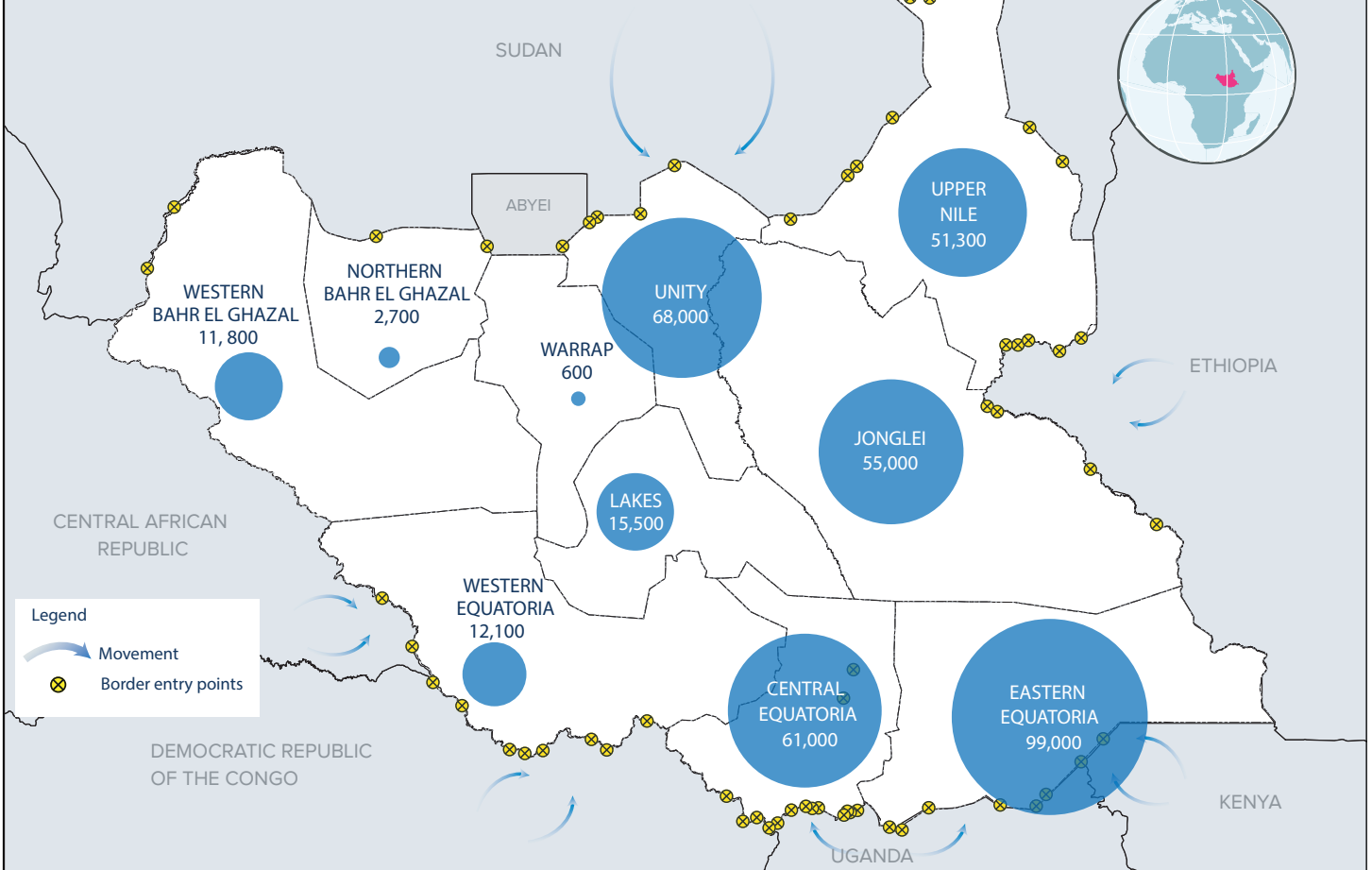


Returns from 2017 - 2021



An estimated 13,308 refugees were reported as having returned to South Sudan by end of March, of which 41 returned last year between June and September, while 13,267 had returned in this month of March.

Spontaneous refugee returns by state (cumulative)



Key highlights on refugee returns and cross border movements

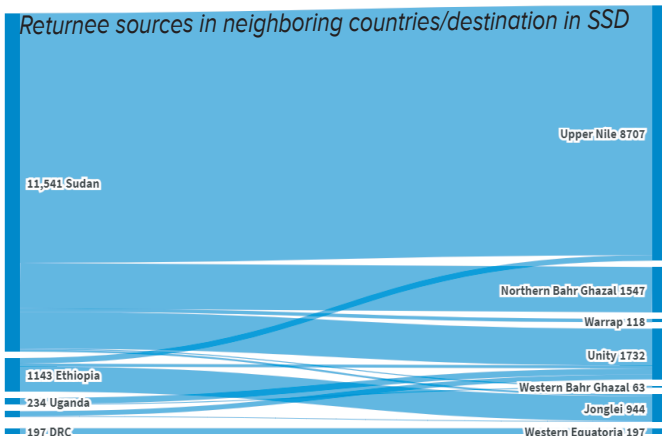
13,308 new South Sudanese refugee returns were reported in March 2021, a high increase over the number of returns reported in the two earlier months of the year.

Information on returnees was collected in 85 Focus Group Discussions and 47 Key Informant interviews conducted during March in places of return in the following states: Jonglei, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Unity, Upper Nile, Warrap and Western Equatoria State.

Most of the verified returns to the six States were from Sudan (87 per cent) with 9 per cent from Ethiopia and less than 2 per cent from Uganda and Kenya. Those in Jonglei, Bahr el Ghazal and Upper Nile States had returned from Sudan and Ethiopia, while returnees from Democratic Republic of Congo were found in Western Equatoria State.

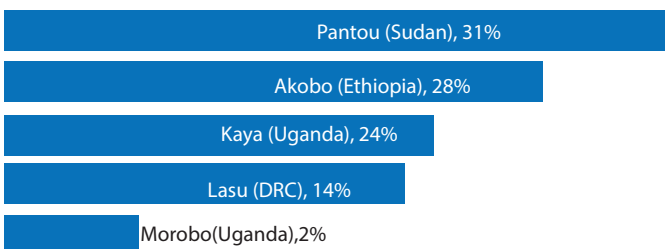
Figures from other states in South Sudan, including Eastern and Central Equatoria, have yet to be verified and will be reflected in the April 2021 report.

During the month, border monitoring reports were received from 18 border crossing points. Some 1880 South Sudanese were monitored crossing into SSD, from the following countries: Sudan (570 individuals), Ethiopia (530), Democratic Republic of Congo (440), Uganda (300) and Kenya (40).



The most frequent border crossing points were Lasu and Gangura with Democratic Republic of Congo, Pantou with Sudan, Akobo with Ethiopia and Kaya with Uganda.

Five most frequented border crossing points during March 2021



Reason for returning to South Sudan

Improved services and security situation were the most often cited reasons for returning home (cited in 50 per cent and 42 per cent of the interviews and Focus Group Discussions respectively). Other reasons given for returning included improved access (18%), reunification with family members (17%) and to check on properties (14%).

Reason for leaving country of asylum

The main reasons cited for leaving country of asylum and returning to South Sudan were lack of employment opportunities in the countries of asylum (37%), lack of access to basic services (36%) and insecurity in the country of asylum (26%).

Key protection concerns at border points and in areas of return (as reported by returned refugees) are:

- Extortion of money, detention and harassment by Kenyan security forces at the Nadapal border crossing and by Ugandan border police and immigration official at Nimule border crossing point.
- Continued armed conflict in Kajo-keji and Yei counties preventing refugees from returning to their habitual residences.
- Limited COVID-19 response capacity at most border crossing points to South Sudan.
- At the Nimule border, UNHCR and partners continue to complement government response at the testing and isolation facility in Nimule hospital.

Methodology

To inform protection and humanitarian response and to assess the needs of South Sudanese refugee returnees, the Government's Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) – in coordination with UNHCR and partners – monitor cross border movements at 37 border points, and the protection and assistance conditions in return areas.

Information is collected through interviews with returnees at border point and household-level assessments regularly in areas of high return. This information is then triangulated with data collected from focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and meetings with local leaders and religious leaders, law enforcement and immigration officials in the area of returns.

Contributing partners



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