

This update is produced by OCHA South Sudan in collaboration with humanitarian partners. It covers the period from 3 to 16 February 2024.

KEY MESSAGES

- Due to the additional support to onward transportation assistance (OTA) received during the reporting period, an additional 1,800 people were transported from Malakal to other parts of South Sudan. Additional riverine transportation of returnees took place between Renk and Malakal.
- There are concerns about the potential increase of people entering through Western and Northern Bahr el Ghazal states due to limited humanitarian presence to receive returnees and refugees.
- The intensification of intercommunal clashes in the Abyei Administrative Area continues to affect the humanitarian response for the 87 refugees stranded at the Abyei transit centre (TC) awaiting onward transportation. However, registration, screening for malnutrition and distribution of fortified biscuits at the Amiet border entry point continue.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

- A large number of people continued to arrive in South Sudan from Sudan. While many were recorded at the 22 monitored border points in Western Bahr el Ghazal, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Unity and Upper Nile states and the Abyei Administrative Area, more people are likely arriving via other areas than the border monitoring teams are able to identify.
- During this reporting period of 3 to 16 February, 19,200 people were recorded entering South Sudan from Sudan, of whom 55 per cent were South Sudanese and 44 per cent Sudanese. This is less than the 25,000 people recorded during the last reporting period. As of 22 February, 572,000 people have arrived since the outbreak of the Sudan conflict in April 2023, with Sudanese nationals accounting for 114,000 people or 20 per cent, including 110,000 who have been processed and biometrically registered.
- About 86 per cent of the new arrivals entered South Sudan through the Joda border point in Renk County, Upper Nile State. The remaining crossed through other border entry points in the rest of Upper Nile (7 per cent or 1,300 people), Western Bahr el Ghazal (6 per cent or 1,100 people) and the Abyei Administrative Area (1 per cent or 235 people).
- The numbers in the [arrivals dashboard](#) do not yet reflect this, but there are early reports of increased arrivals through the Kiir-Adem and Majokynthiou entry points in Northern Bahr el Ghazal and partners on the ground are coordinating an appropriate response. Together with those coming through Western Bahr el Ghazal, more people are reportedly fleeing the west of Sudan, including Darfur.
- OTA continues to be the most critical area of this response. During the reporting period, the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management provided a 300-seat aircraft, moving some 1,800 returnees from Upper Nile to final destinations. Through its humanitarian arm Caritas, the catholic church of Malakal expressed willingness to provide one boat to move the returnees from Renk to Malakal.
- Land, water and air remain the main modes of OTA, with 16,242 people moved from Joda to Renk by road, 5,383 people from Renk to Malakal by boat and 5,050 people from Malakal to destinations of choice throughout South Sudan by air. There were more movements by air and boat and fewer by road than in the last reporting period, indicating that the backlog of people is being addressed.
- In Renk, border monitoring teams observed 3,520 individuals moving back to Sudan. Those interviewed listed concerns about the distance between Maban refugee camps and the border, family reunification, health treatment, and perceived insufficient food and basic assistance in South Sudan as reasons for their departure. Departures were also recorded in Maban and Wedwil refugee camps.
- As mentioned in [Situation Report No. 26](#), the security situation in the Abyei Administrative Area rapidly deteriorated following intercommunal clashes between armed groups in late January and early February. Thousands were displaced, with some seeking safety at the United Nations Interim Security for Abyei (UNISFA) peacekeeping force compound. The spread of violence continues to impede the operational capabilities of humanitarian actors and has heightened fear and anxiety among new arrivals residing at the Abyei TC.

HUMANITARIAN NEEDS AND RESPONSE

Renk, Upper Nile State

Critical humanitarian needs:

- A mass nutrition screening test conducted at the Renk TC revealed a proxy global acute malnutrition rate of 24.5 per cent among children under age 5 – significantly above the World Health Organization's determined emergency threshold of 15 per cent. The same test for pregnant and lactating women and girls (PLWs) resulted in a threshold rate of 15 per cent. More attention is required for nutrition services for such children and women.

Responses and gaps:

- Humanitarian partners continued to provide food and nutrition assistance, including fortified biscuits at the Joda border point and cash assistance at the Renk TC. Partners also screened children aged 6-59 months and PLWs exhibiting moderate acute malnutrition, providing them with specialized food. Nearly 22,700 people received food assistance during the reporting period, including nearly 3,700 children and PLWs.
- Coverage of nutrition services stands at 98 per cent, indicating that most children and women in need are accessing nutrition services.

- Humanitarian partners continued to receive requests to distribute additional food to a refugee population wishing to remain in Renk rather than moving to Maban refugee camps. A collective and coordinated decision on the way forward is required.
- WASH, protection, legal and medical services continued to be provided in Renk. Some of these were also provided in Joda.
- Returnees and refugees in mixed marriages face challenges proving their nationality due to a lack of valid documentation. In response, protection partners have developed a guidance note on mixed marriages for use by the various partners.
- The construction of additional communal shelters at the extension site (TC2) is ongoing, with 68 shelters (accommodating 2,200 people) of the planned 87 (to accommodate 3,000 people) completed to date.
- WASH actors successfully increased the amount of water to 15 litres per person per day across all sites in Renk/Joda and have reduced the latrine ratio to 99 persons/latrine from 200 persons/latrine in the previous reporting cycle.

Malakal, Upper Nile State

Critical humanitarian needs:

- A breakdown in Sudan's telecommunication network for almost two weeks prevented returnees from contacting their relatives in Sudan.

Responses and gaps:

- Partners screened 745 children aged 6-59 months and 372 PLWs and admitted 195 children aged 6-59 months and 92 PLWs to the treatment programme. Humanitarian partners distributed fortified biscuits to more than 1,800 individuals.
- The number of returnees at the Malakal TC decreased due to government-supported onward transportation, with nearly 1,800 individuals moved thus far.
- The construction of a cholera treatment centre started on 8 February as a preparedness measure against the outbreak in Sudan.
- Free telecommunication services were accessed by 1,367 people.
- Protection teams raised awareness of available services, protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) and other protection risks, including gender-based violence (GBV), trafficking in persons, disability inclusion and safety with over 1,000 people in the Bulukat TC.
- An amount of 15 litres of water per person per day was provided to those at the Bulukat TC, with additional potable water delivered to the airport to support the returnees moving to their final destinations.

Maban, Upper Nile State

Responses and gaps:

- Partners continued to provide hot meals to the new arrivals at the Gendrassa and Doro reception centres and integrated refugees into ongoing camp assistance once settled.
- Some 194 people at Gendrassa were provided with solar lamps and core relief items including blankets, mosquito nets, sleeping mats, buckets, jerry cans, kitchen sets and soap before going to their plots in Kaya camp.

Northern and Western Bahr el Ghazal states

Responses and gaps:

- Partners provided hot meals to new arrivals at the reception centre, dry rations to returnees upon arrival in final destinations, and specialized nutritious food to prevent and treat malnutrition in children and PLW. During the reporting period, over 5,300 people were assisted.
- Solar lamps were given to 200 women and girls to enhance safety during nighttime visits to latrines. However, there is a need for additional solar lamps and street security lights in the settlement to address safety concerns.

Bentiu, Unity State

Critical humanitarian needs:

- Partners in Bentiu continued to receive new returnee arrivals across Rotriak, Mayendit, Leer, Panyijar, Mayom and Koch counties. Returnees reported walking long distances to reach their return communities and being exposed to protection risks along the way. Upon arrival at their final destinations, many complained of limited access to food and livelihood opportunities.

Responses and gaps:

- Protection teams raised awareness on available services, PSEA and other protection topics including GBV, trafficking in persons, disability inclusion and safety, reaching 196 people in the Bentiu displaced persons camp and 30 individuals in Panakuach.
- Telecommunication services were provided to 527 people.
- Some 5,681 children were screened for malnutrition and 61 were referred to further services.

Rotriak, Unity State

Responses and gaps:

- An inter-agency mission travelled to Rotriak on 8 and 9 February to verify arrivals between November and February. The two-day exercise identified 585 households of 1,736 people and profiled them for the required assistance.

Jamjang, Ruweng Administrative Area

Responses and gaps:

- The back-and-forth movement of Sudanese nationals from Heglig, Sudan to Panakuach for medical services continues to put pressure on the outreach clinic at the border, which was established with limited capacity to provide emergency services for new arrivals. This movement resulted from a lack of medical supplies in Heglig Hospital due to the conflict.

Abyei, Abyei Administrative Area

Critical humanitarian needs:

- A further deterioration in the security situation was witnessed in the Abyei Administrative Area during the reporting period, as clashes between armed groups continued from the end of January to February. Thousands of people were displaced and took refuge at the UNISFA peacekeeping force compound. The spread of violence has raised fear and anxiety among new arrivals at the Abyei TC.

RISK MANAGEMENT/CONTINGENCY PLANNING

- The situation in Renk remained unpredictable due to the surging influx of new arrivals, as the conflict intensified in Sudan's Kosti District of White Nile State and spread closer to the South Sudanese border. About 1,300 new arrivals arrived in Renk daily, outpacing the onward transportation from Renk to final destinations. Local authorities and humanitarian actors continued to monitor the situation and provided essential support to the growing population.
- Attention needs to be paid to the number of people entering South Sudan through the northwestern border areas, including Western and Northern Bahr el Ghazal states.

LOGISTICS

- Logistics services were provided as usual.

COORDINATION

- Coordination continues through the established mechanism, with partners reporting through the [3W Emergency Response to Sudan Crisis](#) in particular for response to refugees. Other partners working through the inter-cluster coordination group in areas away from the borders are working through the [2024 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan \(HNRP\)](#) with the relevant coordination mechanisms.

FUNDING

- In 2023, 36 per cent of funding to partners was achieved in South Sudan, as reported in the [Refugee Funding Tracker](#).

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