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Ethiopia



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Situation in South Sudan

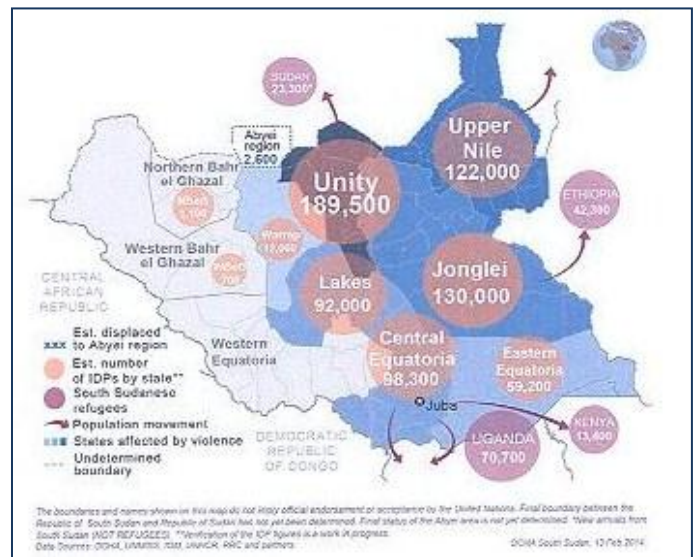
Since the agreement on cessation of hostilities was signed in January, reports of on-going clashes continue in South Sudan as the political leaders are negotiating the terms for the resolution of the crisis. The second round of peace talks is currently underway in Ethiopia. The conflict has left thousands dead since mid-December and has caused almost 900,000 others to flee their homes.

Less than half of the displaced have received some kind of aid, as the humanitarian access to civilians affected by the conflict remains a challenge. Efforts to expand relief operations are hindered by insecurity especially in the conflict-affected states, as well as extensive negotiations to get permission to enter areas controlled by either government or opposition forces.

According to OCHA, the crisis has brought new patterns of vulnerability in South Sudan. With high levels of displacement, violent incidents, access constraints, propensity of flooding and interruptions to the harvest season, severe food insecurity will increase. In a country that has up to 4 million food insecure people in a normal year, the hunger situation is exacerbated if the coming April's sowing season is impeded by the conflict. The nutritional situation is deteriorating among the worst affected population, already malnourished prior to the crisis. With the rainy season and subsequent flooding approaching, there is also an increasing concern of malaria and cholera outbreaks.

Aid Agencies launched a new South Sudan Crisis Response Plan, appealing for 1,27 billion USD to assist 3,2 million people affected by the humanitarian crisis.

Acknowledging the persistent security concerns of many of the displaced, UN has warned against the return of the 150,000 South Sudanese who have fled to neighboring countries. The conflict is anticipated to be leading to a long-term humanitarian crisis, depleting the already meagre resources within South Sudan and neighbouring countries.



South Sudanese asylum seekers in Ethiopia

South Sudanese refugees have continued to flee across the border into Ethiopia to escape the escalating humanitarian crisis. The latest influx has not only surpassed all initial projections, but has required revisions on the working figures on an almost weekly basis.

UNHCR has now stated that the humanitarian community needs to adjust the working figure, from 60 000 refugees to **150 000**.

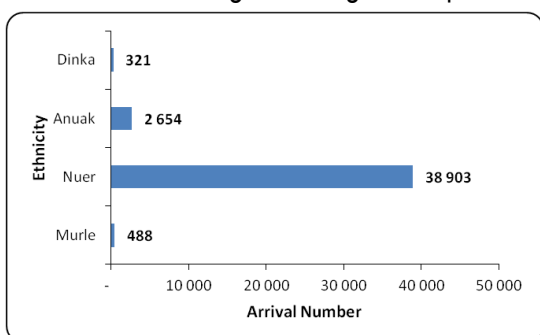
With the registrations still on-going, the current number of new South Sudanese arrivals in Gambella region is 42 366 (on 12th Feb). While the majority of the new arrivals are in Akobo (24,630 people), an increasing number of people arriving in February are reaching Pagak (12,578 people) and Matar (3,788 people).

In Benishangul-Gumuz region, the number of arriving asylum seekers is still low, but UNHCR and the Ethiopian Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA) are estimating an influx of 30 000 in their preparedness plan. The arrivals have reported having walked for days and passing several security checkpoints with militants demanding money before reaching Ethiopian border. Interviews with new arrivals also reflect that more people are on their way.

The situation is getting dire in Gambella, and according to OCHA and UNHCR, in few weeks, if preparations for additional influx are not in place, the levels of malnutrition might become alarming. In Pagak border entry point, WFP has provided high energy biscuits sufficient for some 8,000 individuals allocated for 3 days. The emergency health services are mainly treating diarrhea and malaria, but the main challenge in implementation is the lack of ambulances.

The rising arrival figure has alerted the aid agencies to upscale their efforts and start planning for an additional camp site. Also, Lietchor camp has a limited capacity due to being in a flood-prone area. Although a drainage system is under construction in Lietchor, another site is required as the number of refugee is exponentially increasing.

Furthermore, ethnic divisions need to be addressed in the response plan. Currently the Anuak minority are being relocated to the Pugnido refugee camp and the Nuer



majority are transported to Lietchor.

Refugees relocated to Lietchor camp

The relocation of refugees from Pagak, Matar and Akobo to Lietchor continues simultaneously with the registration. Currently 1000-1500 people per day are being transported from Pagak by road, whereas the boat movements from Akobo were delayed and rescheduled to 17th February. The accelerated rate of moving refugees into Lietchor thus also requires intensified efforts to establish the necessary facilities. Lietchor's capacity to absorb the influx is already stretched, but it remains the primary relocation site as the negotiations for a new site are on-going.

On 15th of February, a total of **11,307** refugees had been relocated to Lietchor refugee camp.

Almost 300 unaccompanied minors are waiting in Akobo, and prioritized to be relocated to Lietchor. There are lots of children among the refugee caseload, so a comprehensive response is required. After being transported to Lietchor, the asylum seekers will need shelter and WASH while waiting for the tukuls to be constructed.



Refugee family in a temporary shelter /LWF

In Lietchor camp, development of infrastructure is progressing. Emergency health services have been established with a clinic construction underway. Norwegian Refugee Council has been providing poles and plastic sheets for transitional shelter construction. Danish Refugee Council has increased the water trucking from 40,000 litres to 60, 000 litres per day. This amounts to some 5.3 litres of water per person per day; an improvement from the previous supply but still falling below the emergency standard of 7.5 litres of water/person/day.

Interventions by LWF Ethiopia in Lietchor

Within the implementing partners' matrix, LWF has been allocated the main responsibility of WASH activities, including the construction of the permanent water supply system, sanitation and hygiene promotion, distribution of WASH items and solid waste management. As per LWF's initial feasibility assessment conducted in January in Gambella and the Lietchor site, LWF Ethiopia will establish the permanent water system by drilling 4 boreholes, and constructing a motorized water supply system with elevated reservoir for water storage and distribution purposes.

LWF has now conducted a hydro-geological survey, which indicated the most feasible locations and depth (120m) for the boreholes. The preliminary water supply system design based on the settlement map and outlines was discussed with UNHCR, and the final design, based on the levelling survey underway, will be submitted next week.

In order to cater for the rapidly increasing refugee numbers, LWF has speeded up the procurement of drilling contractor, who will commence the drilling of 2 boreholes this week. The drilling is expected to be done in approximate 2 weeks.

UNHCR and ARRA have expressed their gratitude for LWF's rapid implementation, as water has been deemed the greatest concern in the camp. Within the current implementation plan, the emergency water supply and permanent water system construction coincide seamlessly, thus securing uninterrupted distribution of water.

Staff recruitment for the field office key positions is also currently ongoing. UNHCR and ARRA are supporting LWF by providing a satellite office and storage plot, while the construction of office structures is underway.

ACT Appeal and Funding

LWF has launched an ACT Final Appeal together with IOCC/EOC-DICAC on 13th of February, replacing the preliminary Appeal that was issued in December 2013.

The target requirement for the Joint Appeal is 3,5 million, of which 2,23 million is for LWF's interventions. 400 000 USD has been already allocated for LWF for WASH activities by UNHCR.

A link to the Appeal can be found at the end of this refugee story posted on the ACT website:

<http://www.actalliance.org/stories/a-long-walk-to-safety-story-of-an-asylum-seeker-from-south-sudan>

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