

# Spontaneous refugee returnees from Sudan

01 June 2019 - 31 July 2019

**43,400**

Spontaneous refugee returns from Sudan between November 2017 and July 2019 out of a total of 193,126

**25,890**

Spontaneous refugee returns from Sudan between 1 June – 31 July 2019

**95**

Percentage of returnees who said they intended to stay in South Sudan permanently

**Some 25,890 South Sudanese refugees returned from Sudan in a self-organised manner between 1 June and 31 July 2019**, according to monitoring conducted at main transit and arrival routes by UNHCR, South Sudan's Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) and partners. Following the fall of Sudan's former president Omar al-Bashir in April 2019, refugee returns from Sudan have increased due to insecurity. Bad road conditions during the rainy season led to a decrease in the rate of such returns from Sudan in the last two weeks of July 2019. Most of the returnees arrived in Unity State, while a smaller number arrived in Upper Nile. The majority are women and children. (Areas monitored included: Rubkona, Koch, Mayom, Leer, Mayendit, Guit, Panyijir, Abiemnhom and Pariang counties in Unity State and Manyo, Malakal, Fashoda, Panyikang, Melut in Upper Nile State.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- **In June 2019**, 17,288 individuals reportedly returned from Sudan to Unity State in Rubkona (9,269 individuals), Koch (4,609), Mayom (1,477), Leer (595), Mayendit (555), Guit (475), Panyijiar (293), Abiemnhom (9) and Pariang (6) counties. Most returnees to Unity had been living in Khartoum, Khartoum North (Bahri) and few others from Kosti, Jabal Aulia, Kharasana, Bielel, Khor Omer, Buram, Madani, El Kobra, Um Durman etc. and entering to South Sudan mostly through Panakuach/Pantou and Hegleich border points.
- Those who returned in June cited the following main reasons: insecurity in Sudan, restriction of movement in/out of the refugee camps/settlements, insufficient access to basic services and lack of employment and livelihoods opportunities in Sudan, and improvement of security and anticipation of better services (education, food and medical services) in South Sudan.
- Some 787 individuals reported returning from Sudan to Upper Nile in Panyikang (250 individuals), Manyo (225), Malakal (215), Fashoda (80) and Melut (15) of Upper Nile State. They reported returning from Al redis 1 camp, Kosti, Khartoum and Jouri camp and entering to South Sudan through Kaka, El Kuek, El Fau border points.
- **In July 2019**, some 7,815 South Sudanese refugees returned in a self-organized manner from Sudan. Most reported returning from Khartoum and entering South Sudan through Panakuach/Pantou and Hegleich border points. Those who returned in July cited insecurity, and insufficient employment opportunities and basic services in Sudan.
- Most households reported paying for and organizing their own transportation (i.e. no other entities provided support) to return to South Sudan.
- The most common protection concerns reported along the journey were extortion, theft of belongings, valuables, arrest and detention.
- Upon arrival, returnees reported needing non-food items, shelter items, health care and food.
- Many returnees chose to settle with relatives in bigger communities and in the UNMISS Bentiu Protection of Civilians (POC) site to obtain easier access to services, livelihood opportunities and shelter support.

## RESPONSE

- In line with the updated (April 2019) non-return advisory to South Sudan, UNHCR and the South Sudanese authorities are coordinating the response to protection concerns; however, refugee returnees' humanitarian needs must be addressed through existing humanitarian assistance mechanisms using community-based and needs-based approaches.
- UNHCR South Sudan coordinates with UNHCR Sudan on a periodic and ad hoc basis to address protection concerns along the route. At arrival, UNHCR South Sudan is working with the RRC to address the protection concerns and humanitarian needs.
- From 4 to 11 July, UNHCR led an inter-agency, rapid household-level survey covering 387 households (3,535 individuals) in and around the Bentiu. Of those interviewed, 71 percent said they intended to stay in South Sudan permanently. Only 14 percent reported formally registering as refugees in Sudan; however, all South Sudanese were granted prima facie refugee status in Sudan whether they are registered by UNHCR or not.
- On 31 July, UNHCR facilitated an inter-agency mission to Bentiu, which included the RRC Chairperson, and members of the Humanitarian Country Team. The mission gave leadership the opportunity to see first-hand the situation on the ground, provide support to local authorities and humanitarian partners, and advocate to mobilize resources.
- Contributing partners included IOM, UNFPA, Danish Refugee Council, International Rescue Committee, Mercy Corps, and Nonviolent Peace Force.



*Buses from Sudan carrying South Sudanese refugee returnees arrives in Rubkona County in Unity State of South Sudan. UNHCR/June2019.*



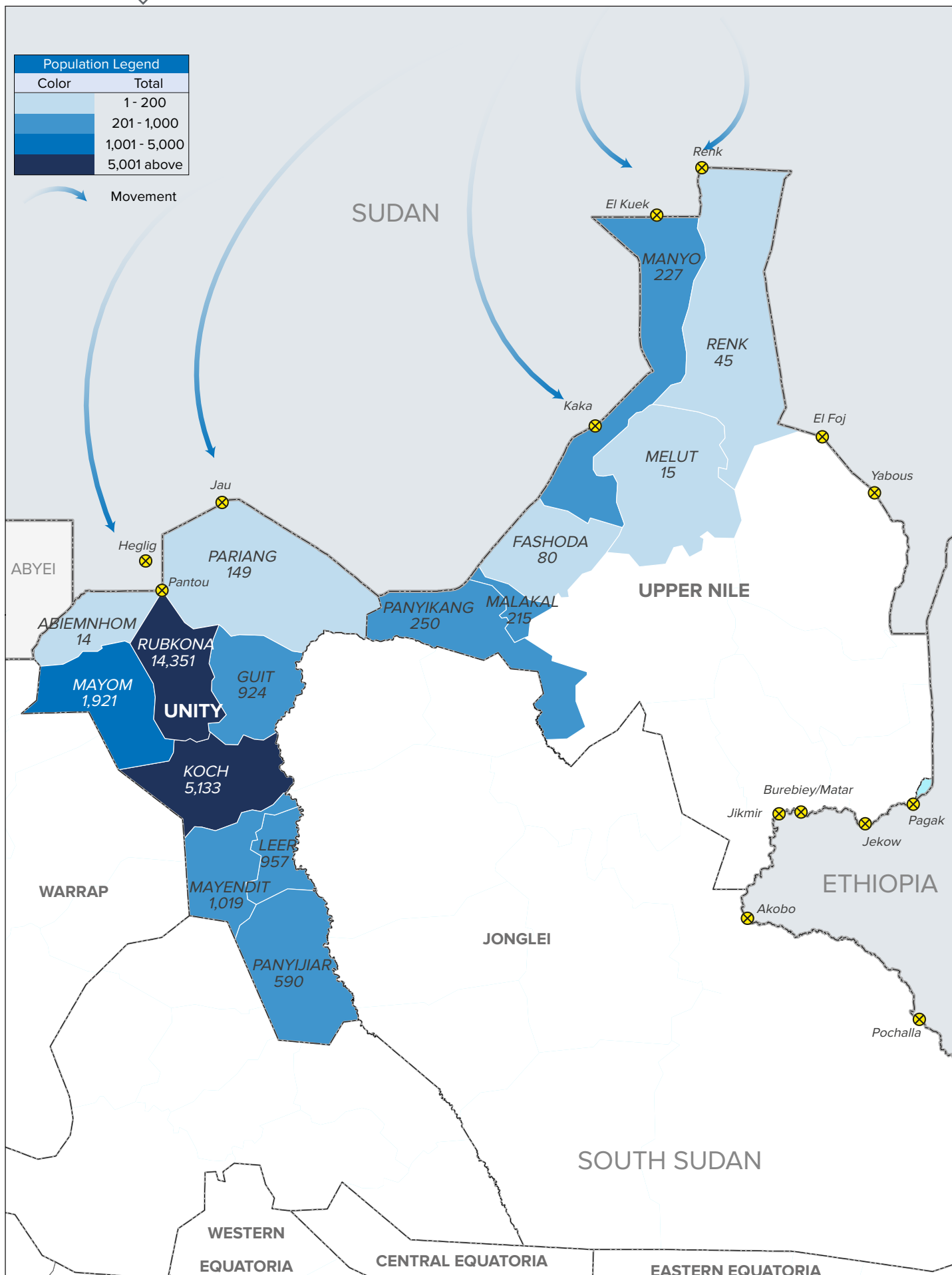
*UNHCR and partners conducting focus group discussion with South Sudanese refugee returnees from Sudan in Mayendit County. UNHCR/June2019.*

## CONTACTS

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The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Final status of Abyei area is not yet determined.

Source: Geographic data: UNHCR, UNCS, UNDP.

Refugee Returnee statistics: UNHCR and Partners.

Author: UNHCR Representation Office in South Sudan.

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