SOUTH SUDAN
Household Survey: Spontaneous refugee returns
October-December 2019

From November 2017 to December 2019, UNHCR in partnership with South Sudan’s Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) estimates some 235,802 South Sudanese refugees have returned to South Sudan spontaneously or in self-organized manner. To learn more about the challenges they face and their plans for the future, UNHCR, RRC and partners conducts an in-depth, household-level survey of returnees across the country. Data for this assessment was collected from October to December 2019, during which 2,379 households (16,321 individuals) were interviewed in high return locations in all ten states (Central Equatoria, Eastern Equatoria, Western Equatoria, Jonglei, Western Bahr El Ghazal, Northern Bahr El Ghazal, Unity, Upper Nile, Warrap and Lakes).

Findings of periodic household-level survey
- The highest number of spontaneous refugee returnees surveyed came from Sudan (6,212), followed by Uganda (5,603).
- A majority (80%) were women and children, with 55% being female headed households.
- Mostly (42%) of the refugee returnees car pooled or drove a private car, while 37% came by bus.
- Mostly (92%) 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 (67%) of respondents said they intended to stay permanently.

Main reasons for return included:
1. Improvement of security situation in South Sudan.
2. Reunite with family members.
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.

- Mostly (70%) of refugee returnees said they intended to remain in the village to which they returned, while only 7% expressed desire to move to a different county.
- Mostly (94%) of surveyed refugee returnees said they feel safe in their current location and 83% said that they have good relationship with the host community.
- Mostly (74%) reported owning a house and/or land in South Sudan, but 15% and 9%, respectively, do not have access to it for various reasons.

General situation and overreaching issues in places of returns:
- Returning families have challenges of shelter and NFIS because they are not able to return with any items. Returnee families are fully dependent on sharing items with hosting families which strain resources and relationships.
- Lack of comprehensive health services in the places of returns has a huge impact for the returning families. Health services in counties are limited.
- Lack of reliable livelihood opportunities in the places of returns. Many returnees have the capacity but lack of startup capital. Many of them have the land for farming but they lack seeds and tools.
- House, land and property issues is another challenge for returning families. Some of the returnees could not return to their places of origin within the Payam because their land/houses and properties have been occupied by the cattle keepers from other states.

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

UNHCR Representation in South Sudan, 06 February 2020
Background and methodology

From November 2017 to December 2019, UNHCR in partnership with South Sudan’s Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) estimates some 235,802 South Sudanese refugees have returned to South Sudan spontaneously or in self-organized manner. To learn more about the challenges they face and their plans for the future, UNHCR, RRC and partners conducts an in-depth, household-level survey of returnees across the country. Data for this assessment was collected from October to December 2019, during which 2,379 households (16,321 individuals) were interviewed in high return locations in all ten states (Central Equatoria, Eastern Equatoria, Western Equatoria, Jonglei, Western Bahr El Ghazal, Northern Bahr El Ghazal, Unity, Upper Nile, Warrap and Lakes).

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**Spontaneous Refugee Returnees**

**Female-headed household**: 55%

**Child-headed household**: 1.3%

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**HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD PROFILE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents by gender</th>
<th>Gender Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Age group Gender Total %**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 - 17 Yrs</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 - 59 Yrs</td>
<td>95.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 + Yrs</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**HOUSEHOLD BY COUNTRY OF ASYLUM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of Asylum</th>
<th>HH</th>
<th>Individuals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DRC</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>176 Inds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAR</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>179 Inds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>647 Inds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>3,504 Inds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>771</td>
<td>5,603 Inds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>1121</td>
<td>6,212 Inds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**VULNERABLE CASES**

Overall 16% of individuals were identified as vulnerable during the reporting period:

- Unaccompanied children: 674
- Persons with a disability: 602
- Elderly at risk: 288
- Women at risk: 201
- Pregnant women: 164
- Children at risk: 146

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**REASONS FOR RETURN**

**PUSH FACTORS**

- Insufficient employment and livelihood opportunities in country of asylum: 43%
- Insufficient access to basic services in country of asylum: 40%
- Insecurity in country of asylum: 17%

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

**PULL FACTORS**

- Perceived improvement of security situation in South Sudan: 43%
- Reunite with family members: 34%
- Perceived improvement availability of services in South Sudan: 23%

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

Geographic data source: UNHCR, UNCS and UNDP
Refugee returnee statistics: UNHCR and partners

Feedback: Aqeel Zahoor, Information Management Officer, zahoor@unhcr.org
**TRAVEL INFORMATION**

**Mode of transport**
- Return by car: 42%
- Return by bus: 37%
- Return by foot: 11%
- Return by boat: 8%
- Bicycle, airplane etc.: 2%

**Mode of payment**
- Assisted by relatives, friends or others: 70%
- Assisted by authorities in country of asylum: 7%
- Other: Move to another village, move to another state, don’t know, etc.: 23%

**COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS**

Overall 94% individuals feel safe in the current location:
- Tense relations: 17%
- Good relations: 83%

**HOUSING**

Overall 74% of returnees own a house in South Sudan:
- House occupied by others: 26%
- House damaged: 9%
- House destroyed: 19%

**LAND**

Overall 90% of returnees own land in South Sudan:
- Occupied by others: 37%
- Insecurity: 7%
- Other reasons: 56%

**FUTURE PLANS**

**Intended return duration**
- Permanently: 67%
- Less than 6 months: 26%
- Not sure: 7%

**Intention of permanent returnees**
- Want to remain in the same village: 70%
- Want to move to another country: 23%
- Other: Move to another village, move to another state, don’t know, etc.: 7%

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

- Sudan: 2,973
- Kenya: 2,069
- Uganda: 1,165
- Ethiopia: 115
- DRC: 14
- CAR: 7

**Return plan for immediate family members**
- Within 1 month: 644
- Between 1 to 2 months: 1,214
- Between 3 to 6 months: 1,141
- Later than 6 months: 1,041

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**PROTECTION INCIDENTS DURING TRAVEL**

Belongings lost/stolen: 45%
Money extorted: 23%
Incident required medical assistance: 8%
Refugee card confiscated: 7%
Physical & Emotional abuse: 5%
Arrest/detention: 2%
Other: 10%

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**Spontaneous refugee returns by county of arrival (October-December 2019)**

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.