



PRESS RELEASE

Progress and momentum as National Consultations on Solutions Initiative get underway in South Sudan

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Juba – The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), UNHCR, the Refugee Agency and partners, applaud progress toward lasting solutions for forcibly displaced persons as national consultations took place last week in Juba, South Sudan.

The two day event successfully marked another milestone for South Sudan’s implementation of the [Sudan and South Sudan Solutions Initiative](#), under the auspices of IGAD, following the establishment of the Inter-Ministerial National Technical Committee (NTC) and hosting the second High-Level technical meeting in Juba in early January.

The workshop was attended by over 70 persons, both virtually and in person, including representation of those internally displaced, refugee returnees and host communities in Bentiu, Bor, Jamjang, Maban, Malakal, Wau and Yambio. Refugees hosted in Kenya, Sudan, and Uganda also actively participated virtually.

“As fragile peace holds and the number of people seeking solutions increases, we have a unique opportunity before us,” expressed Arafat Jamal, UNHCR Representative to South Sudan. “This process belongs to the government as well as the people of South Sudan, and I welcome the continued robust participation of displaced people as state level consultations are rolled out.”

IGAD commended the Government of South Sudan for the progress witnessed in the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS), which provides prospects for durable solutions for millions of displaced populations.

Reflecting the cross-cutting challenges and collaborative spirit needed to create conditions that would allow for solutions, the Government of South Sudan was represented by the Office of the President and Vice President, Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management, the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) and Commissioner for Refugees Affairs (CRA). In addition, government line ministries, including Gender, Land, Housing and Urban Planning, Education, Health, General Education and Foreign Affairs took part. In addition, representatives from the United Nations, IGAD and civil society participated.

Key priorities raised at the dynamic workshop include accountability and transparent governance; security such as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; peace building; restoration of social services; coordination of returns and support in return areas; and partnerships to ensure solutions are sustainable.

With some 2.3 million South Sudanese refugees hosted in neighbouring countries, another 1.6 million internally displaced and some 360,000 refugees spontaneously returned to South Sudan, their voices at all stages, including in consultative and dialogue processes that are shaping the path to peace, remains vital. The next step on the way towards the IGAD Heads of State Summit



is the launch of state level consultations including outreach to government counterparts, internally displaced people, refugees, returnees, as well as the communities hosting them. The findings of the consultations will inform the drafting of a solutions strategy.

Recognising that there are still significant obstacles in the way of refugees returning home, any return must be voluntary. UNHCR remains committed to supporting the respective governments in their efforts to create the conditions on the ground that will allow for safe, dignified and sustainable return and integration.

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