

SOUTH SUDAN SITUATION

July 2025



South Sudanese new arrivals in Matar Primary school compound wait to get on buses heading to the new site in Luakdong, Gambella region of Ethiopia. © UNHCR

Highlights

- Ongoing political tension and localized conflict has triggered large-scale displacement both within South Sudan and across its borders. According to IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), approximately 200,000 people have been newly displaced internally in South Sudan.
- Since the start of the conflict, some 149,000 people have sought refuge in neighboring countries, including an estimated 30,000 in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), 35,000 in Ethiopia, 60,000 in Sudan, and 24,000 in Uganda.
- Heavy rainfall continues to impact site preparation activities at Luakdong in Ethiopia's Gambella region, causing delays and slowing progress.

Context

UNHCR is closely monitoring the displacement and protection situation in South Sudan, following a sharp escalation of violence and insecurity since February 2025.

While the armed conflict concentrated in Upper Nile State and Jonglei State, there are pockets of fighting in other parts of the country, triggering population movements both within South Sudan and across its borders.

Since March, some 149,000 people have sought refuge in neighbouring countries, including an estimated 30,000 in the DRC, about 35,000 in Ethiopia, 60,000 in Sudan, and around 24,000 in Uganda. Within South Sudan, DTM reports that approximately 200,000 people have been newly displaced in all locations affected by the conflict.

Key figures

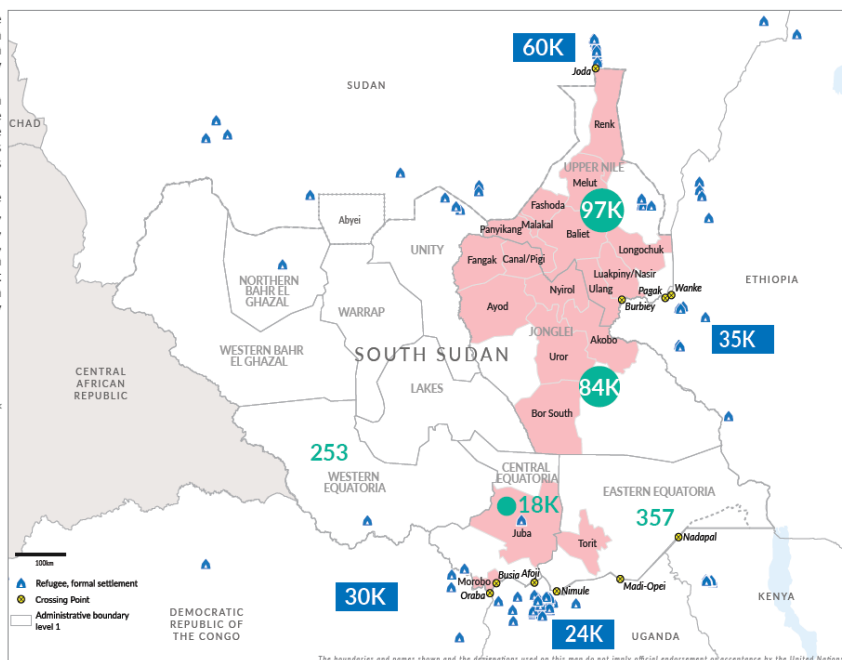
149K

New arrivals from South Sudan in neighbouring countries (since March 2025)

200K*

Estimated new IDPs in all locations affected by the conflict (since February 2025)

- Key affected area in SSD
- XXX Estimated number of new arrivals
- XXX New IDPs
- Crossing point
- IDP location (Pop > 1000)
- ▲ Refugee, formal settlement



* Reported for conflict-induced IDPs by IOM South Sudan for the period covering March to July 2025 out of 382,156 new IDPs in 2025.

UNHCR Comprehensive Overview of Response to Emergencies | dimaehag@unhcr.org | Sources: UNHCR, Governments

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Situation and Operational Response

SOUTH SUDAN

Operational Context

- UNHCR continues to closely monitor the evolving displacement and protection dynamics across South Sudan, where since February 2025, intensified conflict primarily in Upper Nile and Jonglei but also affecting areas like Tambura, Yei, and Morobo has led to road ambushes, abductions including of NGO staff, aerial bombardments, and widespread civilian displacement, while ongoing clashes between SSPDF and SPLA-IO forces and persistent intercommunal violence further destabilize Central Equatoria, Greater Upper Nile, and states such as Warrap, Lakes, and Unity, exacerbating humanitarian needs.
- Humanitarian access remains severely constrained. In Ulang County, Upper Nile State, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) confirmed that its hospital which was destroyed and looted in April 2025 remains non-operational, further limiting access to essential health services in the area.

Population Movements

In Yei County, Central Equatoria State, over 8,000 displaced individuals who returned from border areas in Uganda, after declining to relocate to refugee camps there, have settled in Khor-Kaya village without access to humanitarian assistance. These returnees are in urgent need of food, shelter, education, livelihoods, and WASH services to support their reintegration and recovery.

Protection

In Bor, insecurity in Fangak and Canal/Pigi continues to hinder humanitarian access and disrupt services for approximately 98,000 displaced individuals across Jonglei State. Since January 2025, protection monitoring and response activities have been largely limited to Bor South County due to funding constraints.

UNHCR has recommended the deployment of a Danish Refugee Council-led Integrated Emergency Rapid Response Mechanism (ERRM) team to Fangak, Akobo East, and Ayod counties to conduct protection-based, integrated needs assessments and deliver emergency responses for populations displaced by conflict. Assessments in these three counties have been completed, while deployments to Nyirol, Pigi/Canal, and Akobo West are still pending.

Shelter and Core Relief Items (CRIs)

Despite access challenges, UNHCR's protection team in Bor provided support to 286 vulnerable IDPs at Bor Stadium, distributing CRIs including plastic sheets, solar lamps, mosquito nets, sleeping mats, clothing, and laundry soap. Additionally, 200 women and girls received dignity kits to address hygiene and protection needs.

UNHCR provided CRIs to 1,702 vulnerable individuals across five other IDP sites, helping to address urgent needs amid restricted operational coverage.

In Malakal, ongoing insecurity continues to limit the movement of UNHCR personnel, particularly toward northeastern counties along the Sobat Corridor. Despite these challenges, the Logistics Cluster successfully dispatched the first barge carrying supplies for the Ulang IDP response via the Sobat River. UNHCR is preparing to distribute CRIs to the most vulnerable families in the area, marking a critical step in reaching communities affected by displacement and conflict.

ETHIOPIA

Highlights

- The Government of Ethiopia's Refugees and Returnees Service (RRS) authorized Level 1 (L1) registration to begin in Muon and Matar, following a brief training session including for local authorities who will support nationality screening.
- Renewed aerial bombardment in Nasir County, Upper Nile State, South Sudan has led to an increase in new arrivals in Gambella. The situation continues to be monitored closely as humanitarian actors prepare to respond to the growing needs of displaced populations.
- Heavy rainfall continues to impact site preparation activities at Luakdong, causing delays and slowing progress.
- Malnutrition among children under five and pregnant and lactating women remains a key concern and is being closely monitored, with treatment services currently available. Preparations are underway for a General Food Distribution (GFD). Despite ongoing challenges, partners continue to make progress across critical sectors, delivering emergency life-saving assistance including shelter, health care, nutrition support, food aid, and WASH interventions.

Registration and Relocation

The number of new South Sudanese arrivals in Ethiopia is estimated at 35,000 people.

Registration training sessions were conducted in Gambella and the Nuer Zone for RRS and local authorities to support nationality screening and registration efforts. On 20 July, UNHCR, in collaboration with RRS, facilitated a training for approximately 20 registration and protection staff from both organizations, focusing on Level 1 (L1) Registration Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). The session covered the registration workflow, the L1 dataset, and the use of the Kobo data collection tool. Participants also received training on the Protection Risk Identification Tool.

Protection

Protection Monitoring

Protection monitoring is ongoing in both Muon and Matar. A rapid protection assessment was carried out by the Protection Working Group, and a report is currently being compiled.

Child protection and Gender-based violence (GBV)

Child protection and GBV activities are ongoing in both Muon and Matar. UNICEF is delivering both services, including operating a child-friendly space in Matar, and has recently expanded its activities to Muon. Plan International Ethiopia (PIE) is also active in both locations, deploying social workers and child protection officers to establish community-based structures. PIE has confirmed funding for these activities through December 2025. As relocation progresses, partners plan to transition these services to the Luakdong site.

Site Preparation

Site preparations for the relocation of refugees from Muon and Matar to Luakdong are ongoing, despite challenges posed by heavy rains and waterlogging. While the initial 3.65-kilometer access road experienced delays, there have been some notable improvements, with an additional 8.85 kilometer of road construction approved. Site clearance for shelters and temporary security structures is underway, though access remains limited particularly for WASH partners due to weather conditions.

UNHCR is implementing mitigation measures at Luakdong to address challenges caused by heavy rains, including drainage improvements and protective sheeting. A meeting with the local meteorological office was held, and the Gambella office will soon receive weather forecasts and historical data to support planning. Additionally, the Gambella office is developing a rainy season preparedness plan to guide ongoing efforts.

Shelter & Housing

Site preparations at Luakdong are advancing to support the relocation of refugees from Muon and Matar. Clearance has begun for the installation of 250 family tents, and so far, 200 tents have been set up, and surveying for an additional 64 plots is complete. UNHCR partner Development Expertise Center (DEC) has started constructing 9 communal shelters and 80 upgradable emergency individual family shelters, with the capacity to build 6 communal and 200 individual family shelters daily. Meanwhile, in Matar, PIE has completed two communal shelters, one of which is already accommodating 32 families (approximately 160 individuals).

Core Relief Items

UNHCR partner ZOA distributed dignity kits to 1,450 individuals (925 in Matar and 525 in Muon).

Health & Nutrition

Emergency health services in Muon and Matar including immunizations, clinical care, referrals, and cholera detection were provided by MSF and local health authorities until MSF withdrew on 14 July, handing over supplies to the woreda health authority. Following MSF's departure, the Development Partner Organization (DPO) is preparing to take over health service delivery, with staff already deployed in Nyinyang and a public health plan submitted for Luakdong. Additionally, IRC has established Cholera Treatment Centres in both Muon and Matar, where daily cases continue to be reported among new arrivals.

Screening and treatment for acute malnutrition are ongoing in Matar and Muon. In Matar, GOAL screened over 5,400 children under five, identifying 591 cases (239 with severe and 352 with moderate acute malnutrition). The identified children were admitted to appropriate nutrition programs. Additionally, 754 pregnant and lactating women were screened, with 179 moderately malnourished women enrolled in the Targeted Supplementary Feeding Program (TSFP). In Muon, Action Against Hunger and ACF-USA screened 3,147 children, identifying 261 cases, and referred 95 out of 526 screened women to TSFP.

GOAL also operates a 24-hour inpatient service for severe cases with complications at the Matar Health Centre, where 11 children are currently admitted; seven were referred to Nyinyang hospital, with four stabilized and returned to the nutrition program.

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)

The WASH situation in Muon and Matar is gradually improving despite heavy rains. UNHCR partner ZOA is trucking 30,000 litres of water daily to both sites, with plans to double the supply to 60,000 litres. ZOA and PIE are maintaining hand pumps, while MSF and ZOA have distributed WASH non-food items and dignity kits to thousands of households. Hygiene promotion has reached 5,500 people, and environmental cleaning has been conducted around Matar primary school.

At Luakdong, WASH partners have started facility construction. OXFAM has set up a water treatment facility and is finalizing a storage tank for water trucking. UNHCR has shared latrine designs, and NCA is preparing water trucking, latrine construction, and water collection points, with initial infrastructure in place. UNICEF is initiating a hydrological assessment to support borehole drilling.

Food Security

UNICEF, through World Vision International (WVI), distributed 590 cartons of High Energy Biscuits (HEBs), while PIE provided HEBs to children under 18 and individuals with specific needs. In Matar, GOAL continues to serve hot meals twice daily to children under five and pregnant and lactating women (PLW), with each person receiving 350 grams of food per day. On average, 4,870 individuals are reached, including 3,140 children, 1,540 PLW, and 190 other vulnerable persons.

UNHCR, WFP, and partner WVI, in coordination with RRS, are preparing to distribute dry rations to 50,000 people in Muon and Matar. Due to heavy rains, temporary storage and distribution facilities are being constructed in Yawol kebele, located between the two sites. Logistical planning is underway to transport food from Yawol to Muon and Matar, with UNHCR supporting beneficiary list management and protection services during distribution. Danish Church Aid (DCA), initially set to provide cash assistance, will instead deliver in-kind food aid and is planning a fresh food market at Luakdong using a voucher system, due to the absence of financial institutions in the area.

SUDAN

Highlights

- During the reporting period, an additional 4,000 South Sudanese refugees arrived in Sudan, raising the total number of new arrivals since the crisis began to 60,000 since the onset of the crisis.
- Most of these new arrivals have settled in White Nile State, while others are being hosted in Blue Nile, Darfur, and Kordofan States.

Border Monitoring and Registration

In White Nile State, joint monitoring at the Joda crossing point continued under UNHCR, the Commission for Refugees (COR), and immigration authorities. A total of 5,501 individuals were recorded using the Unified Border Monitoring Tool. UNHCR is working in collaboration with COR and the Sudanese Red Crescent Society (SRCS) to strengthen the humanitarian presence, with a particular focus on protection monitoring and tracking population movements.

In Darfur and Kordofan States, UNHCR and partners continue to conduct border monitoring, with plans to scale up presence at key entry points to better assess the scale and needs of newly arriving refugees. The most vulnerable individuals receive CRIs to address immediate needs, while community structures have also been mobilized to support the identification and tracking of new arrivals. Despite these efforts, in Darfur, refugees who do not transit through the existing sites or settlements often go unidentified. As a result, strategies to enhance and expand outreach to new arrivals in urban areas are actively being explored.

Protection

In Darfur and Kordofan States, UNHCR and partners are implementing both the protection and humanitarian response through protection monitoring to assess risks and ensure safety, distribute CRIs to vulnerable households, and provide case management support to survivors of GBV and children at risk. Community structures have also been mobilized to help identify and track new arrivals, reinforcing coordination and service delivery in both regions.

UNHCR and the COR have strengthened border monitoring efforts across several strategic entry points. This includes the deployment of permanent staff to Joda in White Nile State and ongoing plans to expand presence at Al Megenis and Al Kuweik border points. Coordination with COR has also enabled broader monitoring activities in Blue Nile State. Additionally, partner organizations continue to lead monitoring at border crossings throughout Darfur and Kordofan States. Efforts are underway to enhance cooperation with immigration authorities to facilitate better information exchange and early warning systems.

Access

Access to the newly arrived individuals in Darfur and Kordofan States has been particularly difficult in areas affected by heightened insecurity and recent clashes, such as West Kordofan. Additionally, partners face significant challenges in regularly monitoring border points in South and East Darfur due to their remote locations and poor travel conditions, which are further exacerbated during the rainy season.

Legal Documentation

In White Nile State, UNHCR and COR officially launched the Refugee ID Card initiative, with the first card issued to a South Sudanese refugee girl. The ID cards, designated for individuals aged 16 and above, are intended to facilitate access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and legal support.

Child Protection

More than 120 at-risk children were enrolled in case management systems, with 39 receiving emergency cash assistance. Additionally, 263 unaccompanied and separated children were placed in alternative care arrangements, supported by regular monitoring and counselling.

WASH

In White Nile State, over 5,400 refugees gained access to improved sanitation through the construction of 54 new communal emergency latrines and the desludging of 42 previously non-functional units. To date, a total of 236 latrines have been built, contributing to better living conditions and helping to mitigate health risks within the camps.

UNHCR scaled up its WASH and health response to the cholera outbreak in refugee-hosting areas of Darfur and Kordofan. In Darfur, medical supplies were delivered, and clean water was provided to over 37,000 people. In Kordofan, 8,000 individuals accessed clean water through a voucher system, over 6,000 received soap for hygiene promotion, and health workers were trained in infection prevention and control.

Shelter & Core Relief Items:

Distribution of CRIs and plastic sheeting is underway across targeted refugee sites in White Nile, Blue Nile, Darfur, and Kordofan States.

UGANDA

Highlights

- Following the surge in violence in South Sudan in late February, Uganda has received approximately 24,000 South Sudanese refugees, primarily from Jonglei, Unity, Upper Nile, Central Equatoria, and Eastern Equatoria States. Women and children account for over half of the new arrivals, many of whom are deeply traumatized and urgently require specialized assistance.
- Rhino Camp Settlement currently hosts 55% of the newly arrived refugees, placing increased pressure on already overstretched services.

Population Movements and Registration

Uganda has so far received 24,000 South Sudanese refugees since the escalation of the violence in late February, bringing the cumulative number of South Sudanese new arrivals between January and July 2025 to 37,267 South Sudanese refugees.

Relocation

Despite ongoing efforts to manage flow and reduce congestion, reception and transit centres remain under significant strain. During the reporting period, 6,060 individuals were accommodated across various centres. Lokung is currently operating at 162% of its intended capacity, posing serious risks of secondary health issues and a looming protection crisis.

Many of the newly established settlement zones lack adequate access to health care, water, and education, highlighting the urgent need for funding to restore essential services. Food insecurity is worsening across key refugee-hosting areas in West Nile including Rhino Camp, Palorinya, Adjumani, and Bidibidi where limited resources continue to impact the nutritional well-being of displaced populations.

Protection

There is also a notable increase in the arrival of unaccompanied children and individuals with specific needs, many lacking proper documentation, which impedes their access to protection and essential services. Limited capacity at border points and inadequate funding are hampering effective responses to pendular cross-border movements and raise concerns about the ability to monitor and safeguard vulnerable populations.

Health

The first confirmed cholera case in Yumbe District was confirmed during the reporting period, worsening the existing health gaps, and emphasizing the urgency of improving WASH interventions across settlements and transit sites.

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

Highlights

- The humanitarian situation for the new arrivals in the DRC remains critical, with urgent needs in protection, healthcare, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), emergency shelter, and food assistance. The ongoing influx is also placing considerable strain on local infrastructure and the resilience of host communities.

Population Movements and Registration

Due to limited resources, the National Commission for Refugees (CNR) was unable to continue the official profiling exercise initiated in June 2025. CNR initial profiling indicated 23,842 new arrivals (4,932 households) as follows; Okaba: 9,365 people, Gole: 9,808 people and Arile (Ulendere) 4,669 people.

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) subsequently conducted a data collection activity using information provided by local leaders in areas highly concentrated with new arrivals. A total of 5,929 households representing approximately 32,073 individuals were documented as follows: Okaba 2,107 households (11,283 individuals), Gole 2,336 households (12,283 individuals) and Ulendere 1,486 households (8,146 individuals).

Relocation

UNHCR's strategy to address this ongoing influx involves relocating new arrivals to safer locations approximately over 40 kilometers from the South Sudanese border, aiming to enhance their safety and improve access to essential services. However, this approach is being hindered by limited logistical and financial resources for large-scale relocations, shortage of emergency shelters, inadequate WASH infrastructure, and food supplies, as well as delays in profiling and registration due to capacity constraints. Although an operational plan has been developed, it urgently requires funding and strengthened support from donors and partners to be effectively implemented.

Protection

CNR staff were deployed to the border points where daily arrivals of asylum seekers fleeing violence in Morobo District continue. The deployment aimed to ensure territorial access, uphold fair asylum procedures, and implement initial protection measures to guard against violence, abuse, and

Currently, UNHCR and CNR are prioritizing protection-related activities, including profiling and border monitoring, uphold the principle of non-refoulement, and guarantee fair access to asylum procedures. UNHCR is developing a coordination mechanism with CNR, MSF, ICRC, and Malteser to align information sharing and harmonize response efforts and is exploring cross-border information-sharing and early warning systems to anticipate further influxes.

KENYA

Kenya has not observed any spike in new arrivals from South Sudan but continues to receive new refugees and to monitor arrival trends.

Response Plans and Funding Situation

South Sudan: Preparedness and Initial Response Needs, May – October 2025

UNHCR is [seeking \\$36.25 million](#) to strengthen preparedness and deliver initial life-saving protection and assistance to new IDPs in South Sudan and up to 303,000 new refugees, asylum seekers, and returnees in neighboring countries.

Resources

- UNHCR's [Operational Data Portal \(ODP\) for the South Sudan Situation](#) provides weekly updates on the refugee and returnee arrivals in South Sudan's neighbouring countries.
- [South Sudan: Preparedness and initial Response needs, May – October 2025](#)