

SOUTH SUDAN SITUATION

August 2025



A South Sudanese family receive their upgradable shelter in Luakdong site, Gambella region of Ethiopia. © UNHCR

Highlights

- Since February 2025, escalating localized conflict has led to the internal displacement of approximately 200,000 people across Upper Nile, Jonglei, and Central and Eastern Equatoria. This has increased the total number of newly displaced persons in 2025 to 337,930.
- Since the start of the conflict, some 164,000 people have sought refuge in neighboring countries, including an estimated 33,000 in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), 35,000 in Ethiopia, 70,000 in Sudan, and 26,000 in Uganda.
- Inside South Sudan and in neighboring countries such as Sudan, humanitarian access remains severely restricted in conflict-affected regions particularly where large populations of displaced people are concentrated. These access constraints continue to pose significant challenges to the timely and effective delivery of life-saving assistance to the most vulnerable communities.

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 164,000 people have sought refuge in neighbouring countries, including an estimated 33,000 in the DRC, about 35,000 in Ethiopia, 70,000 in Sudan, and around 26,000 in Uganda. Within South Sudan, DTM reports that approximately 200,000 people have been newly displaced in all locations affected by the conflict since February 2025.

Key figures

164K

New arrivals from South Sudan

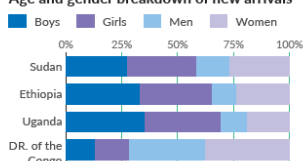
55%

of new arrivals are children

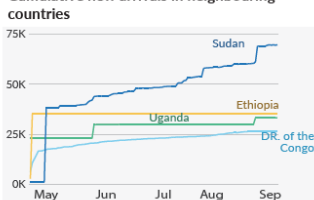
200K

Estimated new IDPs

Age and gender breakdown of new arrivals



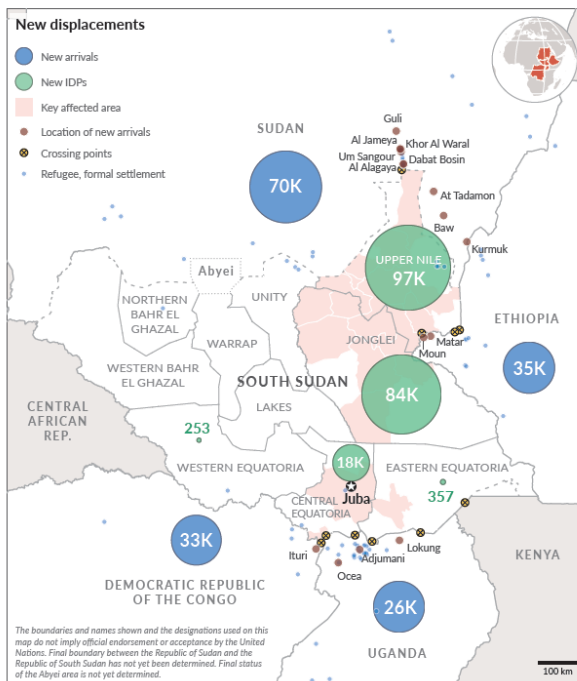
Cumulative new arrivals in neighbouring countries



Sources: UNHCR, Governments

UNHCR Comprehensive Overview of Response to Emergencies | dimehag@unhcr.org

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Situation and Operational Response

SOUTH SUDAN

Operational Context

- Conflict continues across South Sudan, with significant escalations in Western Equatoria State. In Greater Tambura and parts of Yambio, frequent armed confrontations have led to casualties, mass displacement and an ambush on a UNMISS patrol in Tambura, where local armed groups [seized](#) a small cache of weapons and ammunition.
- Access constraints in conflict-affected areas, where most IDPs are located, remain a major challenge, limiting the delivery of assistance to the most vulnerable.

Population Movements

Since February 2025, escalating conflict has led to the internal displacement of approximately 200,000 people across Upper Nile, Jonglei, and Central and Eastern Equatoria. This has increased the total number of newly displaced persons in 2025 to 337,930.

In Central Equatoria, recent clashes in Pokula, Yei River County, have displaced more than 1,000 civilians, primarily vulnerable women, children, and elderly individuals who are now seeking shelter in schools and public spaces. Local authorities report urgent needs for food, shelter, education, and healthcare among those affected.

In Jonglei, civilians are moving from Pigi County toward Malakal and surrounding villages due to fears of attacks.

Reports of ongoing aerial bombardments in Upper Nile State and Mayom County of Unity State is causing mass displacement, and heightening risks of family separation. Children remain, particularly, at risk of exploitation and limited access to tracing or reunification support. Movement in those areas is reportedly restricted by roadblocks, checkpoints, and insecurity along key supply routes is leaving civilians trapped and unable to access humanitarian aid or relocate to safer areas.

Protection

UNHCR and partners are conducting protection monitoring and assessments in Malakal, Nasir, Ulang, Maiwut, Longechuk, and Fashoda (Kodok), in collaboration with the local authorities and communities. These efforts are focused on assessing protection environment and identifying the most vulnerable individuals and delivering targeted support including cash for protection as part of a broader protection response.

Gender-based violence (GBV) remains widespread, exacerbated by the presence of armed groups. Women and girls are particularly at risk in displacement sites, where impunity and limited law enforcement prevail. Incidents of theft, extortion, and forced evictions are increasing in conflict-affected areas, with armed youth taking advantage of the lawlessness, resulting in civilians losing land and property.

Core Relief Items (CRIs)

UNHCR is finalizing the prepositioning of CRIs to support the flood response in Upper Nile, Jonglei, and Unity states. In Upper Nile and Jonglei, 7,140 flood and conflict-affected individuals have been identified for assistance. As of 31 August, flooding had impacted 273,000 people across 12 counties.

ETHIOPIA

Highlights

- The number of new South Sudanese arrivals in Ethiopia is estimated at 35,000 people.
- Heavy rainfall continues to impact site preparation activities at Luakdong, causing delays and slowing progress.

Population Movements and Registration

Level 1 (L1) registration and relocation remained suspended throughout the reporting period.

Prior to the suspension of Level 1 (L1) registration and relocation activities, a total of 14,117 individuals (2,416 households) had successfully completed L1 registration. Of these, 12,379 individuals (2,098 households) were relocated from Matar and Muon to Luakdong before 1 August. Since the suspension, registration activities have been significantly limited, contributing to deteriorating conditions in Muon and Matar. Services across all three locations remain overstretched, resulting in critical gaps in capacity and access to essential assistance.

Protection

Child protection

Plan International Ethiopia (PIE) has established a temporary child-friendly space that currently serves over 400 children daily, providing a safe and supportive environment for play, learning, and psychosocial support.

A Foster-Care Arrangement Association/Committee was established in Luakdong to support alternative care for vulnerable children. As part of its initial activities, a sensitization session was conducted to raise awareness among caregivers and community members about parental responsibilities, with emphasis on protecting children from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. This initiative aims to strengthen community-based child protection mechanisms and promote safe and nurturing environments for at-risk children.

Approximately 1,140 at-risk children have been identified, including 940 separated children, 60 unaccompanied children, and 140 classified as other vulnerable children (OVC). Of the total, 718 are girls, highlighting the gendered nature of protection risks and the urgent need for targeted child protection interventions.

As part of Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) efforts, a Camp Coordination Forum has been established in Luakdong. This platform enables humanitarian partners to share operational plans with the community, jointly address implementation challenges, and provide refugees with a structured space to raise concerns, feedback, and suggestions. The forum strengthens two-way communication and promotes inclusive decision-making in camp management.

Shelter and Core Relief Items (CRIs)

Shelter construction is progressing in Luakdong, with a total of 543 shelters completed and an additional 1,127 currently under construction. PIE has also completed 4 communal accommodation hangars to support displaced populations.

The Development Expertise Center (DEC) has finalized 714 emergency upgradeable shelters. Despite these efforts, large portions of the Luakdong reception center remain waterlogged, posing challenges to site accessibility, infrastructure stability, and service delivery. Continued investment in site drainage and shelter expansion is critical to improving living conditions and mitigating protection risks.

UNHCR partner ZOA distributed dignity kits to 1,450 individuals, including 925 in Matar and 525 in Muon, helping to address basic hygiene and protection needs, particularly for women and girls. Additionally, CRI distributions were conducted in August for individuals relocated to Luakdong, supporting their immediate needs upon arrival and easing the transition into temporary shelter arrangements.

Health & Nutrition

UNHCR, alongside Wanthowa Woreda, UNICEF, WHO, and Development for Peace Organization (DPO), continue to provide life-saving health services to new arrivals in Muon, Matar, and Luakdong. Non-selective vaccination campaigns have reached thousands of children and adults with oral polio, measles, and cholera vaccines, as well as vitamin A supplements and deworming treatments.

Despite these efforts, the cholera outbreak continues, with the total number of cases among new arrivals now reaching 390. There is also a heightened risk of malaria and a lack of specialized services at Nyinyang Primary Hospital. Limited mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) remains a significant challenge. DPO has established a mobile health clinic in Luakdong, providing over 3,212 outpatient consultations. Patients with severe illnesses are referred directly to Nyinyang Hospital.

Nutrition screening activities are currently underway in Matar, Muon, and Luakdong. So far, 668 children and 724 pregnant and lactating women (PLW) have been screened. Among the children, 85 cases of acute malnutrition were identified 34 with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) and 45 with Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM). Additionally, 28 PLW were found to have moderate malnutrition. Six children have been referred and admitted to the stabilization center for further treatment. Proxy malnutrition rates among children aged 6–59 months remain critically high, with Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) at 21.7% and SAM at 8%, indicating an urgent need for continued nutrition interventions.

In Matar, UNHCR partner GOAL is delivering hot meals twice daily to an average of over 1,500 targeted individuals, including pregnant and lactating women (PLW), children, and elderly persons. This initiative aims to support vulnerable groups with essential nutrition during the ongoing response.

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)

Oxfam is currently treating 150,000 liters of water per day at its emergency treatment plant near Luakdong to support water trucking efforts. Although the plant has a maximum capacity of 440,000 litres, current output is constrained by limited trucking capacity. To enhance storage and distribution, Oxfam has also installed an additional 95,000-liter T-95 storage tank at the treatment site.

At the Luakdong site, Oxfam is finalizing the installation of 1.5 kilometres of high-density polyethylene (HDPE) piping, aimed at significantly boosting water supply to the reception centre. This upgrade is expected to enhance water access and distribution efficiency across the site.

Water distribution efforts continued across key locations, with Action Against Hunger (AAH) delivering 40,000 liters to Luakdong and 20,000 liters to Matar, while Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) supplied an additional 66,000 liters to Luakdong. Currently, no water is being trucked to Muon. The daily per capita water delivery rate for Luakdong stands at 7.6 liters per person per day (L/P/D), which remains below the Sphere minimum standard of 15 L/P/D for emergency settings.

At Luakdong, sanitation infrastructure has been strengthened with the completion of 35 communal latrines and 20 bathing shelters. Over 2,000 household squat holes have been dug to improve hygiene and reduce open defecation, with numbers increasing rapidly as households have been trained to construct their own facilities. Hygiene and sanitation promotion activities are ongoing, with Oxfam and NCA deploying 44 hygiene promoters and 11 latrine attendants to support awareness and encourage safe hygiene practices within the community.

Food Security

WFP and its partner World Vision International (WVI) successfully completed the August general food distribution (GFD) on 29 August, reaching a total of 54,783 individuals across Muon, Matar, and Luakdong. In addition, DCA provided food assistance to IDPs in Muon, reaching 670 individuals from 90 households who had been displaced from Burbiey, Mading, Malow, and Bayachmach kebeles.

Coordination

Sector working groups covering Health and Nutrition, Shelter and Logistics, Food Security, Protection, and WASH continue to convene weekly in Gambella to coordinate response efforts. In addition, camp coordination meetings are held twice weekly at the Luakdong site to support operational planning and inter-agency collaboration.

SUDAN

Highlights

- Since the onset of the crisis, approximately 70,000 South Sudanese refugees have newly arrived in Sudan. This figure reflects the ongoing displacement and highlights the urgent need for sustained humanitarian support and coordinated response efforts across affected states.
- The influx of new arrivals and ongoing relocations is placing significant strain on already overstretched facilities in White Nile State. The state currently hosts 10 refugee camps along the river, accommodating approximately 400,000 refugees.

Population Movement

During the reporting period, 11,389 South Sudanese refugees arrived in Sudan. White Nile State currently hosts 46% of these refugees, followed by Blue Nile (21%), West Kordofan (13%), East Darfur (7%), and South Kordofan.

Access remains a major challenge in Darfur, Kordofan, and Tadamon (Blue Nile), where heavy rains have rendered roads impassable. This has temporarily reduced the number of new arrivals, though movements are expected to increase once conditions improve.

Registration and Relocation

Following the temporary suspension of registration across Sudan, border monitoring at Joda, Al Megenis, and Um Jalala has also been halted. WFP is currently using paper-based systems to manage assistance, however this approach poses risks to the effective delivery of food and services for new arrivals and relocated populations. Meanwhile, UNHCR and partners are conducting household verification and registration exercises for Sudanese returnees.

Protection

Refugee camps are facing critical overcrowding, with eight out of ten operating beyond their intended capacity. For instance, Dabat Bosin camp in White Nile State was originally designed to accommodate around 4,000 individuals but now shelters over 33,000. This extreme congestion has significantly increased health and protection risks, as space for new shelters and essential services is nearly exhausted. Additionally, local communities are opposing further expansion of the camps, especially in areas where the refugee population now surpasses that of the host communities.

In Blue Nile State, UNHCR and partners are delivering psychosocial support, conducting risk assessments for women and children, and engaging with Community-Based Protection Networks (CBPN). These initiatives are enhancing community resilience and strengthening referral systems for individuals at heightened risk.

Shelter & Core Relief Items (CRIs)

Life-saving assistance including medicines, family tents, and CRIs continues within available resources and with additional supplies in the pipeline.

In Blue Nile State, UNHCR has distributed 5,000 plastic sheets to newly arrived refugees, enabling families to construct or reinforce shelters. This support has helped reduce exposure to harsh weather conditions and has contributed to improved protection and dignity for displaced individuals.

Health and Nutrition

Cholera outbreaks have been reported in areas hosting new arrivals, as well as in surrounding locations. UNHCR, together with the Ministry of Health, WHO, and UNICEF, continues to respond; however, significant gaps remain in both health and WASH interventions.

In White Nile State, a nutrition survey covering 300 households including returnees identified 18 cases of malnutrition. All affected children have been enrolled in the community-based management of acute malnutrition (CMAM) programme for treatment. This timely intervention is helping to stabilize nutritional conditions and reduce the risk of mortality among vulnerable children.

UGANDA

Highlights

- The ongoing conflict in South Sudan continues to drive a steady influx of refugees into Uganda, with the security situation in border areas remaining fragile.
- Uganda has received approximately 26,000 South Sudanese refugees, primarily from Jonglei, Unity, Upper Nile, Central Equatoria, and Eastern Equatoria States.
- To ensure preparedness and effective response, Uganda operation is currently reviewing contingency plans, ahead of the end of the rainy season in October when accessibility changes and South Sudanese arrivals may increase.

Population Movement

In August, Bidibidi Settlement remained stable despite armed clashes between the Uganda People's Defense Force (UPDF) and SSPDF in Fitina Mbaya, Yumbe District, which led to casualties and the displacement of thousands. Following a directive from the Minister of Relief, Disaster Preparedness, and Refugees, 2,655 individuals (1,300 men and 1,355 women) from 382 households were initially accommodated at Goboro Transit Centre. Recently, only 30 individuals remain at the centre, reflecting successful repatriation or relocation efforts.

Registration

Mobile registration in zones such as Tika, where new arrivals have been settled, faces significant challenges due to poor connectivity. This has led to delays in key registration processes, including family reunification, documentation of new births, household updates, and the issuance of refugee family attestations, ration cards, and identity documents. Additionally, the absence of sufficient government registration staff and facilities hampers continuous registration efforts, with priority currently given to newly arrived individuals.

Protection

Significant protection gaps remain for women in Rhino Camp, with only one functional protection house serving the entire settlement. This limited infrastructure severely restricts access to safe spaces for survivors of violence and undermines efforts to provide timely and adequate protection support.

Suicide attempts continue to be reported, with one case recorded for the third consecutive week, underscoring persistent psychosocial distress and the urgent need for sustained mental health and psychosocial support. Suicide rates remain notably high in Palabek, Palorinya, and Bidibidi Settlements, highlighting the critical importance of targeted mental health interventions in these areas.

South Sudanese refugees represent the largest group of unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), and this growing caseload is increasingly difficult to manage, especially considering a 33% reduction in UNHCR staffing and a decline in partner presence and services due to funding constraints.

Health and Nutrition

Challenges persist due to shortages of essential medicines and supplies, including anti-malarial. The emergence of epidemics such as Mpox has further strained resources, increasing the cost of surveillance efforts. Continued support is critical to ensure the safe and effective management of new arrivals at border entry points.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

In Rhino Camp Settlement, the average water supply stood at 12.40 litres per person per day, falling short of the emergency minimum standard of 15 litres per person per day. This shortfall is largely due to cloudy weather conditions affecting solar-powered systems, logistical challenges with water trucking, and a surge in new arrivals amid limited resources.

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 33,211 new arrivals (4,932 households) as follows; Okaba: 11,875 people, Gole: 12,907 people and Arile (Ulendere) 8,429 people.

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) subsequently conducted a data collection activity using information provided by local leaders in areas highly concentrated with new arrivals. An estimated 6,642 households, totaling approximately 33,211 individuals, have been identified across various Congolese villages near the South Sudan–DRC border. These figures are preliminary and require further profiling and registration to confirm accuracy.

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

Joint missions involving UNHCR, CNR, and partners are currently underway to assess the situation and engage with local authorities in identifying suitable transit and relocation sites. Border profiling and monitoring activities are being conducted to ensure accurate data collection, uphold the principle of non-refoulement, and guarantee fair access to asylum procedures.

Coordination efforts with CNR, MSF, and other partners continue to support the response. Additionally, mechanisms for cross-border information sharing and early warning systems are being strengthened to enable timely protection interventions. UNHCR is also in ongoing consultations with WFP to explore the possibility of providing food assistance to the affected refugee populations.

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](#)