

Return and Reintegration of Sudanese Refugees to South Sudan

To bring refugees home and to help them re-establish their lives and livelihoods after more than a decade in asylum, UNHCR, in close collaboration with its partners has adopted a regional, flexible modular approach for 2005/2006:

Preparing for Return and Coming Home

- Preparing for repatriation and supporting spontaneous returnees and receiving communities
- Helping create conditions conducive for return and improving absorption capacity in areas of return through protection and community reintegration projects
- Gradual up-scaling and establishment of logistical capacity (way stations, transit centres, logistics capacity) to start organized movements
- Bringing refugees home

Scaling up Return and Putting down Roots

- Upscaling the programme of bringing refugees home
- Continue supporting spontaneously returned refugees and IDPs
- Consolidating return through community reintegration projects



UNHCR Protection Officer with returnee families

To support these efforts, UNHCR recently expanded its presence in southern Sudan, opening an office in Yambio, on March 6 and in Kajo Keji on March 9 to complement its existing offices in Rumbek, Juba and Yei.

In late February, UNHCR deployed an emergency team of experts in fields such as water, sanitation, community services, health, and income generation to begin the reintegration projects. Some of the 550,000 Sudanese refugees and estimated 4 million internally displaced Sudanese could start going home this year.

To improve protection and access to basic social services, UNHCR and its partners started implementation of new community projects, such as support to primary health care facilities, and activities relating to HIV awareness and AIDS treatment in Kajo Keji and Yei counties, near the borders with the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda. A dormitory will be built for students at a vocational training school in Yei. The county will also benefit from efforts to rehabilitate 11 primary and secondary schools, promote education for girls, train teachers and set up income generating activities for volunteer teachers.



Community school under a tree in Yambio

These new initiatives will complement existing projects in a region devastated by decades of conflict.

Recognising that providing clean water is a priority, UNHCR and its partners are currently rehabilitating boreholes in Yei and Kajo Keji counties and training village committees on proper water management.



Few villages are privileged to have a water point

UNHCR and partner agencies are also rehabilitating public health centres and the regional hospital and providing basic medical supplies, equipment and training in Ezo and Yei counties. Electrical systems are being installed, the paediatric ward rehabilitated and a new paediatric wing constructed in the Bahr El Gazal Regional Hospital in Rumbek, the only referral hospital in the province.



Paediatric Ward at Rumbek Hospital

The community-based reintegration projects are being implemented by a number of partners, including Norwegian Peoples' Aid, Jesuit Refugee Services, Comitato Collaborazione Medica, International Aid Services, the American Refugee Committee, Action Africa Help International and the Episcopal Church of Sudan, Diocese of Yei.



UNHCR team at a primary school construction site near Yei

Potential

- returning refugees and IDPs are resourceful people who need to be supported – looking for jobs, land, livelihoods opportunities, preparing land for planting before the rainy season etc.
- large number of returnees are educated and skilled workers – teachers, technicians, businessmen – can contribute to peace building
- very active youth groups in many counties
- population in general happy with the peace and wish to develop their regions – education, health, water, livelihoods and access are priorities

More projects on education, health, water, income generation, and community services are being developed for implementation in the near future.



Girl collecting water in Yei

The protection needs of IDPs and those of returning refugees are the same. These two groups share common places of origin. UNHCR is playing a prominent role in an inter-agency collaborative effort of developing a comprehensive protection-based return and reintegration framework for the displaced to South Sudan.



Riak Dor school near Rumbek

Snapshot of some on-going community based reintegration projects

- Yei & Chukudum hospitals (a total of 8 buildings) and 3 for Yei Medical School
- Rehabilitation of Rumbek pediatric ward, construction of a new one and installation of electric systems in the whole hospital
- Primary schools - Yei 5, Ezo 3, Tambura 3, Riak Dor and demobilized soldiers school in Rumbek, 30 primary schools and three secondary schools in Kajo Keji area
- Rehabilitation of one girls secondary school in Yei
- One vocational training school in Yei
- 30 boreholes/water points in Yei, Yambio, Kajo Keji
- Environmental education activities
- Support to production of 5,000 IEC materials and other HIV/AIDS activities
- 30 computers, UPSs and printers, rehabilitation of offices of local authorities
- Procurement of bicycles and other material for income generating schemes

On-going interventions include

- Preparing for voluntary repatriation in countries of asylum – registration, profiling, vocational training, logistical arrangements
- Implementing protection and community-based reintegration projects in the field of education, health, water, livelihoods activities and co-existence projects
- Capacity building of local authorities and community organizations
- Up-scaling of existing NGO structures and supporting Community Based Organizations
- Income generating scheme to support volunteer teachers, health workers and civil servants

- Procurement of 5000 agricultural kits (hand tools & seeds)
- Support to CBOs in construction of women centers and minor road works



Mine clearance

Under the coordination of UNMAS, UNHCR will support mapping of landmine presence and implementation of mine clearing in return areas and along return routes. An agency will be engaged to survey and remove mines and UXO's from feeder roads & tracks leading to villages. In collaboration with other agencies, mine awareness training has been initiated in returnee areas and in the refugee camps