

Update on humanitarian needs in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States, Sudan

South Kordofan & Blue Nile Coordination Unit

23rd May – 5th June 2013

Humanitarian Overview

Active hostilities have continued in parts of South Kordofan and Blue Nile throughout the reporting period, with intensive ground fighting continuing in Rashad and Um Dorain Counties in South Kordofan, and Kurmuk County in Blue Nile State.

In SPLM-N-controlled areas of South Kordofan, aerial bombardment and ground fighting resulted in civilian casualties and displacement in Buram County, Dellami County, Heiban County, Rashad County, and Um Dorain County during late May-early June. Ground fighting in the Abu Kershola area of Rashad County during late May resulted in SPLM-N withdrawal from Abu Kershola town, which has returned to SAF control. An estimated 6,000 conflict-affected IDPs have been displaced to southern areas of Rashad County and Um Dorain County, and a considerably larger number of IDPs displaced to northern SAF-held areas.¹

In SPLM-N-controlled areas of Blue Nile, ongoing internal displacement of more than 20,000 civilians inside Wadeka payam was reported by monitors during late May – early June, with 1,079 new arrivals reaching assistance in Upper Nile State during the reporting period.² Interviews with IDPs within Blue Nile and with new arrivals in Upper Nile State point to continued reluctance among communities in need of assistance to abandon assets inside Blue Nile, including livestock and cultivatable land. In addition, ongoing concerns regarding disease outbreaks in refugee camps in 2012 and 2013, perceived tensions between refugees and the host community, and the capacity of children and elderly individuals to undertake the journey to Upper Nile State, were also cited as contributing factors to the comparatively low numbers of conflict-affected IDPs seeking refuge in South Sudan during the reporting period.

Humanitarian Access

UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Valerie Amos visited Sudan between May 20-23 2013, to look at humanitarian operations in Government-controlled areas of Sudan. During the visit, Ms Amos addressed the issue of humanitarian access to civilians in SPLM-N-held areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile, and repeated the UN call for the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement - North to agree to a one week cessation of hostilities, to allow for a polio vaccination campaign in SPLM-N-held areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile.³

Ms Amos also encouraged the resumption of direct talks between GoS and SPLM-N to resolve the conflict. There have been no announcements regarding the anticipated next round of AUHIP-hosted talks, following the April 2013 direct talks between GoS and SPLM-N in Addis Ababa.

¹ Monitors were not able to collect population estimates near the front line. OCHA Sudan report the current number in SAF-held areas as 53,000 ([OCHA Sudan Weekly Humanitarian Bulletin Issue 21](#)).

² [Refugees in South Sudan Information Sharing Portal](#), UNHCR. Accessed on June 5 2013.

³ [OCHA Sudan Weekly Humanitarian Bulletin Issue 21](#), UN OCHA. May 26 2013.

Humanitarian needs in South Kordofan

In SPLM-N-controlled areas of South Kordofan, aerial bombardment resulted in civilian casualties and displacement in Buram County, Dellami County, Heiban County, Rashad County, and Um Dorain County during May. Ground fighting intensified in Rashad County in late May, resulting in the reported displacement of more than 50,000 civilians across SAF- and SPLM-N-held areas in Rashad and neighbouring counties.

In addition to displacement, monitors reported significant increased prevalence of severe acute malnutrition, along with increased visibility of wasting and oedema, among infants and young children in Um Dorain and Heiban Counties during the reporting period. In Western Kadugli, monitors also reported increased incidence of respiratory disease and outbreaks of contagious skin infections among the child and adult population. Significant increases in livestock mortality in Buram and Um Dorain Counties were also reported.

New refugees continued to arrive in Unity State, South Sudan during the reporting period; according to UNHCR, more than 73,260 refugees from South Kordofan have now registered at camps across the Sudan-South Sudan border in Unity State.⁴ 331 new arrivals registered in Yida camp during the reporting period; in total, 258 individuals were registered and not provided with ration cards in Yida during May, due to refusal to register for Ajoung Thok camp.⁵ Registration is ongoing in Yida camp for Ajoung Thok, which has a population of 1,082 as of 31 May 2013.⁶ Spontaneous returns from Yida to Buram and Um Dorain Counties were also reported to monitors inside South Kordofan due to the current planting season and ongoing tensions in Yida camp.

Humanitarian needs in Blue Nile

During May, aerial bombardment and ground fighting resulted in civilian displacement from Mayak, Olmedon, Mufu, Abu Dera, Marmiton, and Khor Bashum in Wadeka payam, to Bellila and Sammari areas, moving closer to the South Sudan border (at Guffa crossing point). Monitoring inside Kurmuk County indicates ongoing internal displacement of more than 20,000 civilians inside Wadeka payam during late May – early June. In addition to population displacement, insecurity has also reportedly disrupted cultivation in these areas for a third successive year, raising concerns about ongoing food insecurity in late 2013 and 2014.

Following the rapid growth in the size of the IDP population in the Sammari area during May (reportedly 10,000 as of June 1 2013), a market has been established to serve this community, with goods sourced from traders previously supplying Moguf market. During the reporting period, market prices for standard food items in SPLM-N-held areas of Blue Nile were reported to be prohibitively high for many residents and IDPs to purchase a sufficient basket of items, particularly in Wadeka and Chali payams. Markets in northern areas of Wadeka payam reportedly remained closed due to insecurity.

Food insecurity, health/nutrition needs, and access to water were reported to monitors as the primary needs of IDPs in these areas during interviews with IDPs within Blue Nile and with new arrivals in Upper Nile State. IDPs' reliance on contaminated water points (including hand-dug wells) is a particular concern due to the limited access to medical treatment in these areas, and potential for disease outbreaks in densely populated IDP settlements during the rainy season.

This update is produced by the South Kordofan & Blue Nile Coordination Unit, which works with local civil society organisations and international humanitarian actors to gather credible information on humanitarian needs in the two conflict-affected states.

The next update will be published on 3 July 2013.

⁴ [Refugees in South Sudan Information Sharing Portal](#), UNHCR. Accessed on May 22 2013.

⁵ [Yida population statistics as of June 1 2013](#), UNHCR. June 2 2013.

⁶ [Ajoung Thok Weekly Refugee Population Report as of 31st of May 2013](#), UNHCR. June 1 2013.