



Launch of Organized Return Operations for 2007 with the First Assisted Convoy of Sudanese Displaced to leave this week

Khartoum, 1 February 2007: In a joint effort of the Government of National Unity (GNU), the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS), the International Organization on Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), organized return operations scheduled for the year 2007 will be launched with the first assisted convoy of displaced Sudanese set to leave Dar El Salam camp in Khartoum on 3 February 2007. The number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) expected to be part of the convoy is estimated at around 300.

According to the joint GNU-GoSS-UN plan of organized return, up to 150,000 displaced Sudanese are to be assisted in returning to their places of origin in southern Sudan and South Kordofan.

The preparation for the launching of organized return started in November 2006 when IOM, in partnership with the Fellowship for African Relief (FAR), began registration of displaced Sudanese throughout Khartoum State.

Registered IDP households are selected for return if it is established that the security conditions in the destinations of their choice are conducive to their return; that humanitarian access is available in these areas; and that the return destinations have sufficient capacity to absorb them.

IDPs selected for return assemble at a departure center, constructed and managed by IOM where they undergo pre-departure medical screening and are provided with packages of basic household items by UNICEF, CARE and UN Joint Logistics Center.

Departure centers also provide shelter, water and cooking facilities. Rations are distributed at departure centers and food assistance is provided by WFP once IDPs arrive home.

In order to ensure that return operations are conducted in safety and dignity, IDPs traveling in these organized movement operations are scheduled to overnight in a number of way-stations en-route where they will be provided shelter, basic medical services, and water.

The first convoy that will be leaving on 3 February will stop at the way-station in Kosti, managed by ADRA, and then at the way-station in Kadugli, managed by IOM. The convoy will be escorted by trained IOM convoy managers, an IOM medical escort and a GNU police escort.

For further information, please contact:

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