



UN Assists Over 100,000 Sudanese Return Home

Over 100,000 displaced Sudanese have been assisted home by the United Nations, which represents a significant contribution to implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Since January 2006, over 55,000 refugees and almost 50,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) have been provided transport to their place of origin -- a remarkable achievement, given that just two years ago it was not even possible to fly, let alone drive, between most towns in Southern Sudan.

All organized return operations have been conducted as part of a Joint Plan of the GNU and GoSS, together with the UN. A key to their success has been the positive role played by governments, both inside Sudan and in neighbouring countries. Support from Sudan's Government of National Unity (GNU) and the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) has been critical, particularly that provided by the Humanitarian Aid Commission, Commission for Refugees and the Southern Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission.

For the United Nations, the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has led all refugee operations and has engaged in protection monitoring to ensure that returnees' concerns are being rightfully addressed. The agency also supports through its implementing partners reintegration programs comprising health, educational, water and sanitation projects as well as income-generating projects in the main areas of return. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has transported all IDPs and many refugees, while also providing monitoring and reintegration assistance. The United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) has provided overall coordination services. Other UN actors, particularly the World Food Programme and UNICEF, and a multitude of non-governmental partners, have provided critical support.

Sudan offers one of the most challenging operational environments in the world, with most of Southern Sudan inaccessible during the rainy season from June to December, due to a lack of all-weather roads. To overcome these limitations IOM has used air, river, rail and road corridors in ensuring a safe, dignified, and cost-effective return operation.

Like the hundreds of thousands who have arrived home since the war ended in 2004, those the UN has assisted under the Joint Plan bring important skills and resources that play a key role in rebuilding this war-devastated part of the country. But much remains to be done; the supply of basic services such as clean water, health care and education are far outstripped by demand, despite the best efforts of the government and international community.

This massive return is only one of the many and positive effects of peace in southern Sudan. The number of Sudanese refugees in neighbouring countries has fallen dramatically since 2004, from 515,000 to 270,000, with repatriation operations from Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo now completed, and one camp closed in Ethiopia. Large-scale operations continue from Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda, with smaller returns from Libya and Egypt also ongoing. For IDP operations, most of the main road corridors are now closed for the season, but the Joint Plan will continue to move returnees by air and barge to Upper Nile and Jonglei states, and to the Equatorias.

This joint return operation has demonstrated the vital contribution each partner brings and provided an excellent example of what can be achieved together – by the government and the UN - to deliver real dividends to the people of Sudan in implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

Financial Requirements

Achievements by key operational agencies have been possible through timely allocations of funding, directly from donors and from the Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF) -- an innovative pool of quick disbursing donor funds for high priority activities in Sudan. So far, these agencies have received only \$16.5 million against a total requirement for return-related activity of \$68 million. While all agencies face significant shortfalls, the most critical right now is that facing IOM, with an outstanding requirement of some \$20 million; if additional funding is not received urgently, IDP return operations will cease in July 2007.

Partners

This return operation has been a truly collaborative effort, with many other partners: government, UN and NGOs, making significant contributions. These include:

Government of Central African Republic	Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO)
Government of Democratic Republic of Congo	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)
Government of Ethiopia	UN Joint Logistics Centre (UNJLC)
Government of Kenya	World Health Organization (WHO)
Government of Uganda	
Adventist Development and Relief Agency	African Development and Emergency Organization
Aktion Afrika Hilfe-International	American Refugee Committee
Amurt	Association for Aid and Relief – Japan
Association of Christian Resource Organization for South Sudan	ATLAS Logistics
Care	Catholic Relief Services
Concern	Cordaid
Church Ecumenical Action in Sudan	Danish De-mining Group
Fellowship for African Relief	Friends of Peace and Development Organisation
German Agro Action	German Development Services
Gesellschaft fuer Technische Zusammenarbeit	Handicap International
International Medical Corps	International Relief and Development
International Rescue Committee	InterSOS
Islamic Relief Worldwide	Japan International Volunteer Centre
Jasmar	Johanniter –UNFALL – HILFE
MSF-Belgium	Mine Advisory Group
Norwegian Church Aid	Norwegian Peoples Aid
Norwegian Refugee Council	PACT
Peace Winds Japan	Ru'ya
Save the Children – UK	Save the Children - USA
Sudanese Red Crescent	Sudan Social Development Organization
Sudan Health Association	Swiss Foundation for Mine Action
UMCOR	World Vision International
Youth for Children	Medair