

SOUTH SUDAN REGIONAL REFUGEE RESPONSE PLAN

January 2020 — December 2021



CREDITS:

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All statistics are provisional and subject to change.

For more information on the South Sudan crisis go to: [South Sudan Information Sharing Portal](#)

FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPH:

South Sudanese refugees walk through Jewi refugee camp in Ethiopia.

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Foreword

South Sudan's refugee population stands at 2.2 million, the highest on the continent despite the signing of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) in September 2018. The Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity (R-TGoNU) of South Sudan was established on 22 February 2020. While this event marks an important development to improve prospects for viable comprehensive solutions for the millions of South Sudan's forcibly displaced, several critical issues are still to be resolved during the pre-and transitional phases prescribed by the R-ARCSS.



While some spontaneous returns have been recorded, these are in large part pendular movements prompted by a different set of factors which include dwindling livelihood opportunities in countries of asylum and changing perceptions about security in South Sudan. Over 70 per cent of these returnees have not been able to return to their prior places of habitual residence. UNHCR and its partners in South Sudan do not have access to many return areas due to insecurity. Sample intention surveys conducted in 2019 in all asylum countries have shown that a majority of South Sudanese refugees do not intend to return in the near future. In fact in 2019, over 74,000 South Sudanese new arrivals were recorded in Sudan, Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the Central African Republic.

Of great concern is that 83 per cent of the overall South Sudanese refugee population are comprised of women and children. Even with the commendable efforts of the Regional Refugee Response Plan partners who are often working in extremely challenging environments, significant gaps still exist including in ensuring appropriate care for almost half of the 66,000 South Sudanese unaccompanied or separated children, prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence, sufficient access to safe drinking water and support for self-reliance activities.

As we move into 2020, I am encouraged that all five asylum countries maintain open door asylum policies. Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda have operationalized the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) by including refugees in their national systems thereby enhancing their self-reliance prospects. Progressive out-of-camp refugee policies are also being commendably applied by the Governments of Sudan and the DRC which merit greater support. South Sudan has adopted a national framework on durable solutions which is a step in the right direction in line with the Global Compact on Refugees. The Global Refugee Forum that took place in December 2019 has offered a valuable opportunity for States, donors and partners to renew their commitments to the South Sudanese refugee situation and toward the host communities, through a whole of society approach. We will now follow closely the implementation of the pledges made at the GRF.

I also want give assurances that UNHCR remains firmly committed to lead and coordinate the Regional RRP for the South Sudan situation, which as of January 2020 will now be part of the functions integrated into UNHCR's Regional Bureau for East and Horn of Africa, and the Great Lakes.

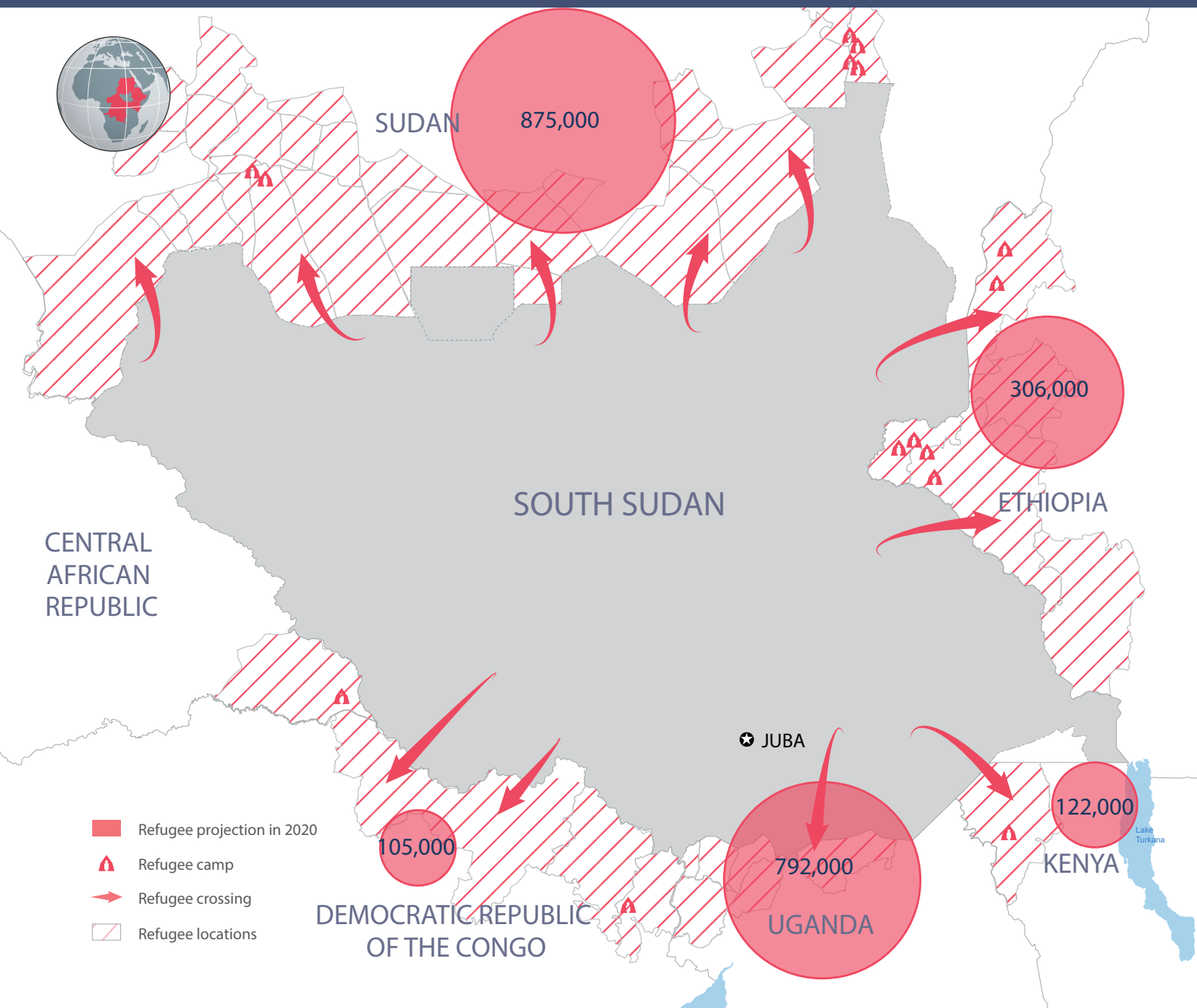
And most importantly, I appeal to the donor community to redouble their efforts in support of South Sudanese refugees by funding the partners of the RRRP at this most critical juncture. This support is imperative not only to address growing unmet needs, but to empower refugees with education and vocational skills to play their part in peacebuilding and development of their country.

Clementine Nkweta Salami

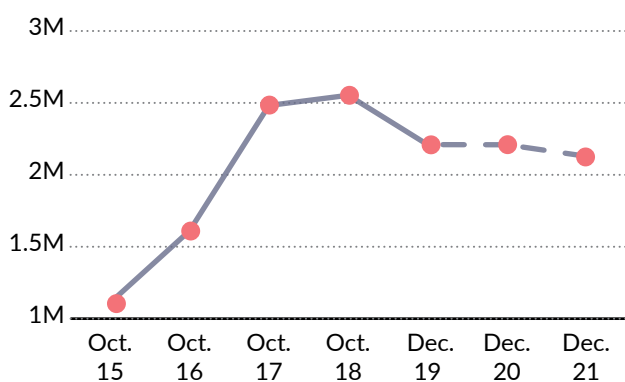
UNHCR Regional Director, Regional Bureau for East and Horn of Africa, and the Great Lakes

2.2 MPROJECTED REFUGEE
POPULATION BY 2020**US\$ 1.3 B**

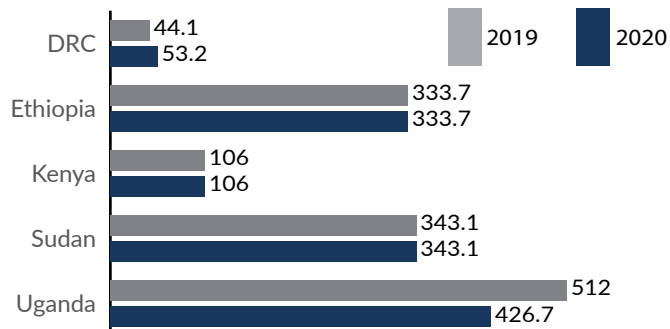
REQUIREMENTS 2020

95PARTNERS INVOLVED IN
2020

Refugee Population Trends 2015 - 2021



2020 and 2021 Requirements | in millions US\$



Introduction

The 2020-2021 Regional Refugee Response Plan (Regional RRP) for the South Sudan situation seeks to provide a regionally coherent inter-agency response supported by host governments in five countries of asylum, including Ethiopia, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Kenya, and Sudan, over the next two years. This updated RRRP continues with the two-year cycle that was introduced with a view to ensuring longer-term predictability in the planning and programming of life-saving and resilience needs of South Sudanese refugees in the region.

Uganda currently hosts close to 861,500 South Sudanese refugees as of December 2019. In 2019, over 31,000 new arrivals entered Uganda, compared to over 40,000 new arrivals across 2018. While full food rations were restored for new arrivals, those who arrived prior to June 2015 no longer receive food assistance.

Sudan hosts over 810,900 South Sudanese refugees as of December 2019. The Government of Sudan estimates the number of South Sudanese refugees to be over 1.3 million. In 2019, Sudan received over 18,500 new refugees, a decrease from the number of new arrivals in 2018 which stood at 30,000. In the seventh year of the response in Sudan, there is a need to move beyond emergency assistance to focus on longer-term solutions, resilience and self-reliance for refugees living in camps and out-of-camp, as well as continued support for host communities.

Ethiopia hosts 334,000 South Sudanese refugees as of December 2019, making this the largest refugee population in the country. Over 8,300 new arrivals sought asylum in 2019. The vast majority were accommodated through the expansion of Nguenyiel Camp in the Gambella Region, while a small number relocated to Gure Shembola Camp which was

established in the neighbouring Benishangul Gumuz region in May 2017. Intra-communal tensions have remained rife in 2019 due to competition over scarce resources, land-related disputes, and demographic changes in the Gambella region. The Gambella region is overstretched by new arrivals and the Government of Ethiopia has called for new arrivals to be transferred to a settlement in the Benishangul Gumuz region. During this sensitive electoral period, increased support to host and refugee communities in Ethiopia will be key to preserve peace and social cohesion between communities which remains fragile.

In **Kenya**, most of the 121,400 refugees from South Sudan are hosted in Kakuma camp and Kalobyei settlement in Turkana county. Some 10,500 South Sudanese new arrivals sought asylum in Kenya in 2019. Kalobeyei settlement was conceived as a joint initiative by UNHCR and the regional government, with the aim of easing the pressure on Kakuma camps and transitioning from an aid-based model of refugee assistance to one focused on self-reliance. In 2018, the Government took on an increased role in the delivery of protection services, making significant achievements in handling reception facilities and conducting registration and refugee status determination with the aim of strengthening the national refugee management system.

The **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)** hosts close to 88,700 South Sudanese refugees by December 2019, including 5,800 who arrived in 2019. Over 63 per cent are children and 2.8 per cent are elderly. Some 62 per cent of the refugee population live outside of camps. The out-of-camp South Sudanese refugees and host population are among the most impoverished. The camp-based population is underserved in terms of meeting minimum standards for basic assistance. The South Sudanese refugee population are in a remote part

of the DRC and receive little international support or attention despite having heightened protection needs affecting children, women and the elderly. Thousands live with impoverished host communities along the border, facing significant security challenges, lack of services, and food insecurity.

In 2020, the Regional RRP is expected to cater for 2.2 million South Sudanese refugees in the five neighboring countries. In 2021, that figure is anticipated to slightly reduce to 2.1 million subject to the revitalized peace agreement currently being implemented. While an

estimated 200,000 South Sudanese refugees were reported to have returned spontaneously since 2017, these returns have not been sustainable and led to a majority living in IDP like situations. Ongoing protracted displacement of South Sudanese refugees is expected to exert further pressure on the already limited economic resources of the host countries. The South Sudanese refugee situation remains the largest in Africa and third largest globally, which urgently calls for greater international solidarity and responsibility sharing – key principles that underpin the Global Compact for Refugees.

Regional Protection and Solutions Analysis

South Sudanese fleeing the conflict continue to enjoy prima facie refugee status in all neighbouring states, in line with Article 1 (2) of the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugees in Africa. There have been no reported instances of refoulement or denial of access to asylum procedures for South Sudanese in the region throughout 2019. Maintaining the civilian character of refugee settlements throughout the region is a key regional protection priority and a responsibility which is incumbent on refugee hosting states.

About 83 per cent of the refugees are women and children who are prone to multiple protection risks, including Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV). The level of exposure of vulnerable segments of the refugee population

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