

DRC

Displacement from South Sudan



	Not required	Low	Moderate	Significant	Major
Need for international assistance	Very low	Low	Moderate	Significant	Major
Expected impact	Very low	Low	Moderate	Significant	Major

Crisis overview

Since mid-July over 15,000 South Sudanese refugees have arrived in the territories of Faradje and Aru in Haut-Uele and Ituri provinces following a resurgence of violence in South Sudan. DRC has been experiencing an influx of refugees into Aru territory in Ituri, close to the border with South Sudan, since October 2015. There is now a total of 27,250 registered South Sudanese refugees in the territories of Faradje and Aru in Haut-Uele and Ituri provinces. The new arrivals have received little humanitarian assistance. Lack of food, shelter, and medicine has been reported in Ituri.

Limitations

The situation is fluid: as refugees move back and forth across the border in search of food and other supplies, estimating the total number of South Sudanese refugees is difficult. The same people are likely to be registered more than once.

Ongoing fighting in South Sudan continues to trigger displacement. At this stage it is very hard to estimate the likely rate of influx in to DRC.

Key findings

Anticipated scope and scale

The security situation in South Sudan is likely to remain volatile over the coming months. Fighting between government and opposition forces will continue across the country, including across parts of Central and Western Equatoria, from where people are likely to continue to flee to neighbouring DRC.

Priorities for humanitarian intervention

- **Food:** The South Sudanese refugees in Ituri lack food, and face severe food insecurity.
- **Health:** As more people continue to arrive in Ituri, sites become overcrowded and the risk of disease outbreak is high. Refugees are likely to have travelled long distances and be in need of health assistance.
- **Protection:** Refugees are likely to be in need of psychosocial support as grave human rights abuses, including a high incidence of sexual violence, have been reported in South Sudan since conflict escalated in July.

Humanitarian constraints

Armed groups have been increasingly active in Mambasa, Ituri, since August, limiting access. Violence has also increased in neighbouring Nord-Kivu, which is likely to further constrain access to Ituri.

Lack of infrastructure and poor road conditions in the region also impacts the ability of humanitarian actors to deliver aid. The October–June rainy season will further constrain access in the region.

Crisis impact

South Sudanese refugees have been arriving in Ituri province since October 2015 (OCHA 24/08/2016). As of 31 August, 27,250 South Sudanese refugees have been registered in the territories of Faradje and Aru in Haut-Uele and Ituri provinces (OCHA 07/09/2016). Around 15,000 people have arrived since mid-July, following the resurgence of violence in South Sudan. The arrivals are mainly children, women, and older people from Juba, Morobu, and Yei in Central Equatoria (Xinhaunet 04/08/2016). They have received very little humanitarian assistance since their registration in July (UN Radio 10/09/2016). On 23 September, over 300 South Sudanese refugees in DRC were relocated to Uganda, due to lack of food, shelter, and medicines in Ituri (All Africa 26/09/2016).

Food: There is a lack of food in Ituri, and many refugee arrivals are likely to be facing severe food insecurity, since unprecedented levels of food insecurity have been reported in South Sudan this year. 4.8 million people in South Sudan are severely food insecure. This is one million more than in the same period last year, which was already a severe crisis (FEWSNET 17/09/2016; IPC 29/07/2016).

Despite the food crisis in South Sudan, refugees are reportedly crossing back over the border to South Sudan in search of food (UNHCR 16/09/2016).

Health: Refugees usually have limited access to health services. A lack of medicines has been reported in Ituri (All Africa 26/09/2016).

Infectious disease outbreaks are often associated with overcrowded refugee camps (AFRICHOL Access on 19/07/2016). A large influx of refugees in a short period of time will increase the likelihood of disease outbreak.

Protection: Refugees are likely to be in need of psychosocial support. In South Sudan grave human rights abuses, including high rate of incidence of sexual violence have been reported since the conflict escalated in July. Many women and girls arriving in DRC have reported sexual assault during their journey (UNHCR 16/09/2016).

Refugees returning to their villages of origin in South Sudan to collect food risk attack by armed groups both in DRC and in South Sudan (UNHCR 16/09/2016).

Refugees are also vulnerable to attack in DRC. In September, refugees near the city of Doruma, in Haut-Uele province, were attacked, their food rations were stolen, and a health centre was looted (UNHCR 16/09/2016). Suspected LRA militia attacked a South Sudanese refugee camp on 6 September in Masombo in Dungu territory (Haut-Uele) (OCHA 07/09/2016).

Shelter and NFIs: There is a lack of shelter for the new arrivals (All Africa 26/09/2016). There is also a lack of non-food items including clothing (UN Radio 08/09/2016; All Africa 26/09/2016).

South Sudanese refugees have mainly been living with host families or have been sheltered in primary schools (Radio Okapi 05/09/2016). Since 2014, Ituri has been host to over 60,000 IDPs fleeing violence in Beni, Nord-Kivu. This has likely resulted in overcrowding in IDP and refugee camps (OCHA 24/08/2016).

Nutrition: Some of the South Sudanese refugee children have reportedly shown signs of malnutrition (Radio Okapi 08/09/2016).

WASH: Due to overcrowding, access to clean water is limited. Poor sanitation facilities risks facilitating the spread of waterborne diseases. Flooding in April/May had already led to an increase in WASH needs in Tchomia health zone in Ituri (OCHA 09/06/2016).

Vulnerable groups affected

The majority of people fleeing South Sudan are women, children, and older persons (UN News Centre 16/09/2016). An estimated 5% of children are unaccompanied (UNHCR 16/09/2016).

Humanitarian constraints

Humanitarian access has deteriorated in eastern DRC due to ongoing conflict. The lack of infrastructure and poor road conditions in the region also impacts the ability of humanitarian actors to deliver aid. The October–June rainy season is also likely to further constrain humanitarian access in the region.

As of 19 August, 65% of the roads in neighbouring Sud-Kivu are reportedly impassable, due to insecurity (Radio Okapi 19/08/2016). Access restrictions in the area may limit timely humanitarian access to Ituri and Haut-Uele.

Aggravating factors

Seasonal information

The upcoming October–June rainy season will likely impact access to clean water and increase vulnerability to diseases, such as cholera, particularly in settlements along the Ituri River.

Armed group activity and internal displacement

Armed groups, including the Mayi-Mayi Simba, have recently been active in Mambasa (Ituri). On 26 August, three people were killed in an attack by Mayi-Mayi Simba (Radio Okapi 29/08/2016). In April, violent clashes between the Mayi-Mayi Simba and the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC) in Mambasa, resulted in twelve deaths (Radio Okapi 19/04/2016).

In recent months, the ADF Nallu has been increasingly active in the neighbouring province of Nord-Kivu (Radio Okapi 25/09/2016). Violence in Nord-Kivu may spill into Ituri: more people are likely to be displaced, humanitarian needs will intensify, and access will deteriorate.

The ADF Nallu has also been active in Ituri. In May, the group attacked villages in Ndalya and Biane, resulting in 4 deaths (Radio Okapi 08/05/2016). Five people were killed in the villages of Ndalya and Katabeyi, as a result of an ADF Nallu attack on 14 May (Radio Okapi 15/05/2016).

Front for Patriotic Resistance in Ituri (FRPI) forces have also recently been active in Ituri, in recent months. The FRPI have been an active armed militia in Ituri, since 2002, and was born out of local fighting over land and the proxy wars between DRC, Uganda, and Rwanda (IBT 29/10/2015). On 18 September, clashes between FRPI militias and the FARDC were reported in the village of Ofay (Radio Okapi 18/09/2016). On 23 July, FRPI militias attacked a truck with travellers in Walendu Bindi (Radio Okapi 24/07/2016). Seventeen people were held hostage by FRPI militias in Mandibe on 12 July (Radio Okapi 13/07/2016). Clashes between the FRPI and the FARDC were also reported in Walendu Bindi on 28 June (Radio Okapi 28/06/2016).

In addition to the refugee population in Ituri, the area has hosted over 60,000 IDPs since 2014. In late August it was reported that an additional 9,000 IDPs arrived in Mambasa in Ituri following a recent upsurge in violence in Nord-Kivu (OCHA 24/09/2016).

Election-related violence

Political tensions can negatively impact security in eastern DRC and hamper humanitarian response. Protests and violence related to the scheduling of the forthcoming elections have taken place in Kinshasa, Lubumbashi, Bukavu, and Goma since the beginning of the year, and the situation is likely to deteriorate (ACLEDD 29/03/2016).

Disease outbreaks

The regular movement of people within and across countries may exacerbate risk that the disease spreads.

Yellow fever is active across the DRC, and an outbreak was declared in neighbouring Bas-Uele province on 20 June (The East African 20/06/2016). In June, a severe malaria outbreak was declared in Haut-Uele province (OCHA 22/07/2016).

Cholera transmission has been high in DRC. From 1 January to 7 September, 18,252 cases of cholera, including 516 deaths, have been reported across the country, compared to 8,028 cases during the same period in 2015 and 10,945 cases in 2014. The outbreak has however mostly been in the southeast, away from Ituri and Haut-Uele (WHO 07/09/2016).

There is still a risk of cholera as it is present in South Sudan. There has been a rise in the number of cases since July: as of 20 September 2,143 suspected cases have been reported including 31 deaths. Over half the caseload recorded is in Juba. Cases have also been reported in Central Equatoria from where people are reportedly fleeing towards DRC (UNICEF 22/09/2016).

Food insecurity in DRC

As of 24 August, 75,000 people in Aru territory, Ituri province, are moderately and severely food insecure (OCHA 24/08/2016, OCHA 07/09/2016). A locust invasion in August has exacerbated the food crisis as over 60% of crops in Aru have been destroyed (OCHA 24/08/2016).

Contextual information

History of conflict

In South Sudan conflict erupted in the ranks of the SPLA in December 2013, after President Salva Kiir accused Vice President Riek Machar of plotting a coup against him in Juba. Within the army, Nuer and Dinka troops clashed. Since the outbreak of civil war over 50,000 people have been killed (Al Jazeera 03/03/2016; Small Arms Survey 2015).

A peace deal formed between the SPLA and SPLA-IO was signed in August 2015 and in April 2016 a transitional government was formed after Riek Machar returned to Juba to resume his position as Vice President. The peace agreement and transitional government appeared at risk of collapse after heavy fighting broke out in the capital between government and opposition forces. Following the fighting Machar fled the capital and on 25 July Kiir announced he had replaced Machar with member of the SPLM-IO, Taban Deng Gai (Al Jazeera 26/07/2016). This move has caused deep divisions within the opposition and is perceived by many of Machar's supporters as a breach of the August 2015 peace agreement (Sudan Tribune 26/07/2016).

Likely developments

The security situation across South Sudan remains tense and unpredictable. Fighting is ongoing in parts of Greater Equatoria, Western Bahr el Ghazal and Unity, though it is not clear to what extent these are related to the macro-level conflict. In some instances, it is likely that armed groups separate from the two main warring parties will take advantage of the uncertainty to try and gain control of land and other resources (OCHA 22/09/2016; Reuters 02/08/2016). As fighting continues to drive displacement more people can be expected leave South Sudan. New influxes of people fleeing violence in Western and Central Equatoria are likely to arrive in DRC in the coming weeks.

Past displacement

Prior to the recent surge of violence in South Sudan, there were around 12,000 South Sudanese refugees and 2,500 returnees in Haut-Uele and Ituri. The majority of these refugees fled heavy fighting that broke out in November 2015 in Ezo, Yambio, Mundri and Tambura counties in Western Equatoria (Sudan Tribune 09/01/2016; UNHCR 11/03/2016).

Since fighting escalated in South Sudan July, it is estimated that the total number of South Sudanese refugees in Haut-Uele and Ituri is above 27,000 (OCHA 07/09/2016).

Stakeholders

SPLA: After the creation of South Sudan, the SPLA's political branch, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), became the ruling party. The group's leader, Salva Kiir from the Dinka ethnic group, became President of South Sudan. The SPLA is estimated to number 210,000 soldiers (IISS 2013).

SPLA-IO: In late 2013, Riek Machar, Vice President and a senior SPLA commander belonging to the Nuer ethnic group, was accused by President Kiir of planning a coup, and removed from his position. This led to the formation of the SPLA-IO and civil war (Small Arms Survey 2015; IASR 2015).

Other armed groups: The conflict situation is complex as many armed groups have splintered from the SPLA-IO, and never adhered to the August 2015 peace agreement. (Small Arms Survey 2015). Following the removal of Riek Machar as Vice President it has become more unclear as to how armed groups may align themselves.

United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) recently had its mandate extended until the end of August 2016. UNMISS currently consists of 12,100 troops, and 1,200 police (UNMISS 31/03/2016). UNMISS is in charge of PoC sites (UNSC 13/07/2016).

Following the fighting in July the African Union approved the deployment of a regional force to South Sudan comprising an additional 4,000 troops, to which the government agreed in early September, although it is delaying cooperation (AFP 05/09/2016; UNHCR 16/09/2016).

International and neighbouring countries' relationship to the conflict

Uganda: Traditionally a supporter of the SPLA, Ugandan military convoys crossed into South Sudan on 14 July to evacuate its citizens from Juba. The convoy of around 50 trucks and up to 2,000 soldiers may remain in Juba to aid the SPLA (AFP 14/07/2016).

Sudan: Historically, Sudan has supported South Sudan's armed groups in their opposition to the government. If the conflict escalates again in South Sudan, it is likely that Khartoum will renew its support. A number of Sudanese armed groups still operate within South Sudan.

Key characteristics of host population and area

Demographic profile: Ituri population: 4,241,236 (2006). Bunia population: 65,658 (2006) (Government 18/02/2006)

Food security: Northern Ituri is in IPC Phase 2 (Stressed) and 3 (Crisis), Southern Ituri is in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) and 4 (Emergency) (IPC Info 17/11/2015)

Health statistics: Number of children per woman: 5.9 (former Orientale province) (Knoema 02/2015). Infant mortality rate: 99/1,000 live births; maternal mortality rate 810/100,000 births (National statistic) (World Bank 2015).

WASH statistics: 52% of the former Orientale province's population does not have access to drinking water (Knoema 02/2015)

Literacy: 1,540,227 people over the age of 15 are illiterate (former Orientale province) (Knoema 02/2015).

*Ituri province was formerly part of the larger Orientale province.

Response capacity

Local and national response capacity

The government has insufficient capacity and ability to provide humanitarian assistance to the refugees located in Ituri (All Africa 26/09/2016).

International response capacity

Thirty-five humanitarian agencies are present in Ituri, including OCHA and UNHCR (OCHA 12/2015). UNHCR faces major gaps in all sectors and has called for the mobilisation of additional resources (OCHA 07/09/2016). Over 30 to 31 August, WFP distributed 13 tons of high-energy biscuits to 7,769 refugees in the territories of Aru and Faradje in Ituri and Haut-Uele (OCHA 07/09/2016).

Information gaps and needs

- There is a general lack of information regarding the current situation and needs of refugees in Haut-Uele.
 - There is a lack of information on local and national response capacity
- There is a lack of information on the specific sectoral needs of both the new arrivals and the needs of host communities.

Lessons learned

- South Sudanese refugees have often experienced prior internal displacement, increasing their vulnerability (UNHCR 16/04/2014).
- Since the peace agreement was signed in South Sudan in August 2015 there has been no notable return movement of the South Sudanese refugee population (UNHCR 08/07/2016)