

HUMANITARIAN

Overview

1 APR – 1 MAY 2006

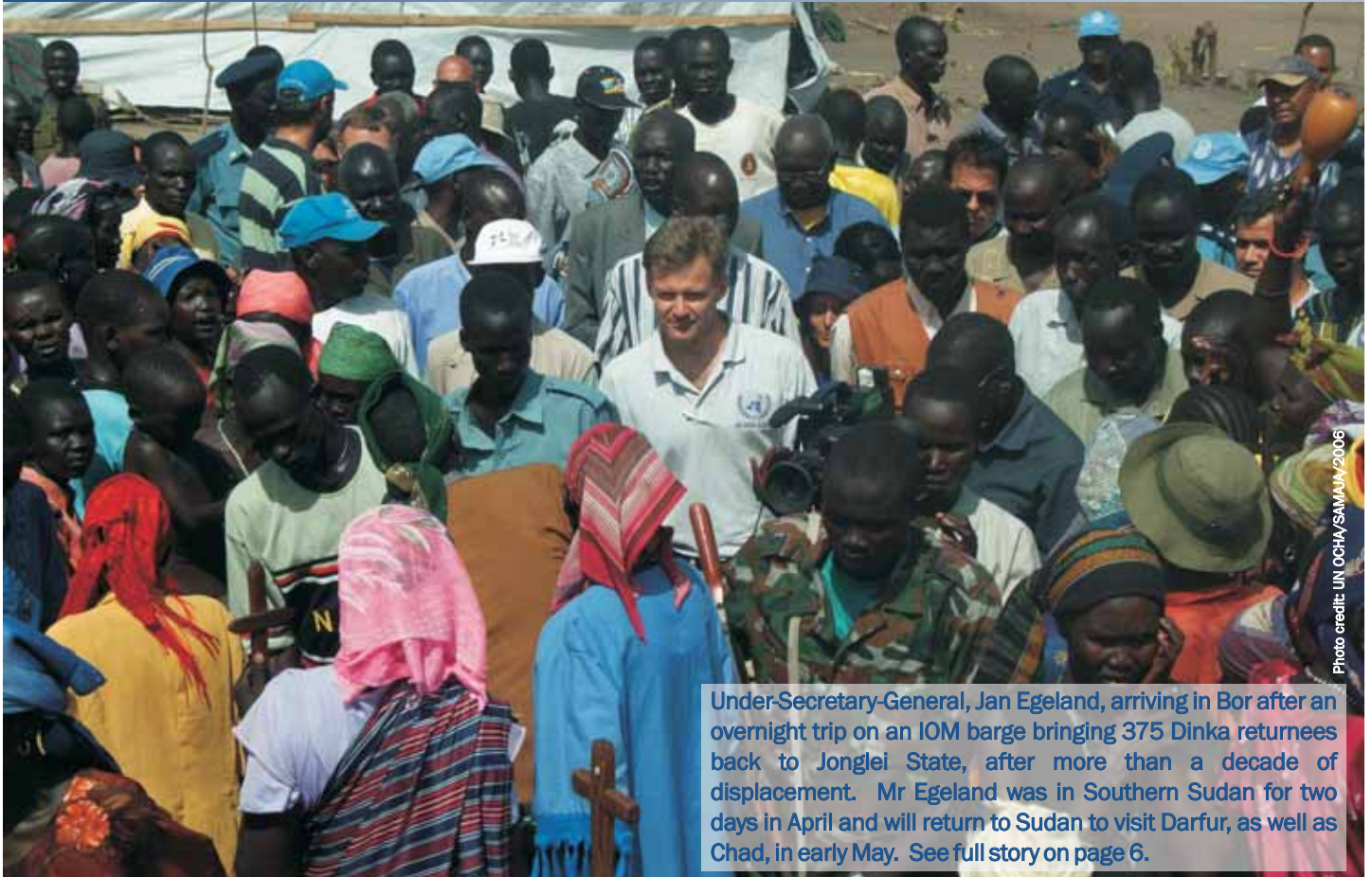


Photo credit: UN OCHA/SAMAJ/2006

Under-Secretary-General, Jan Egeland, arriving in Bor after an overnight trip on an IOM barge bringing 375 Dinka returnees back to Jonglei State, after more than a decade of displacement. Mr Egeland was in Southern Sudan for two days in April and will return to Sudan to visit Darfur, as well as Chad, in early May. See full story on page 6.

THIS ISSUE'S HIGHLIGHTS:

- ACCESS RESTRICTIONS IMPEDE HUMANITARIAN OPERATIONS
- FOCUS ON GEREIDA, SOUTHERN DARFUR
- UPDATE ON OUTBREAKS: CHOLERA, AVIAN FLU AND MENINGITIS
- 30,000 FLEE ATTACKS IN SOUTHERN DARFUR

Welcome to the fourth issue of Sudan Humanitarian Overview 2006. Produced by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), in collaboration with other UN agencies and partner NGOs, the SHO aims to provide an overview of humanitarian trends and activities in Sudan, as well as to focus on particular issues of interest. Send comments and contributions to sho@unsudanig.org

DARFUR

As the deadline for the Abuja peace talks drew to a close at months end, turmoil on the ground was widespread. Violence was perpetrated by all parties to the conflict. In early April, Under-Secretar-General Jan Egeland, on an official mission to Sudan, was denied access to Darfur by authorities. Kalma Camp was without a coordinator for the most of the month after NRC was expelled from South Darfur state. Hijackings of NGO vehicles halted operations in North Darfur and use of UN white vehicles and helicopters by Government forces and SLA caused alarm among the humanitarian community. Attacks and counter-attacks south of Nyala displace an additional 30,000 people, most of whom were still unaccounted for at the end month, bringing the total of newly and re-displaced persons up to 250,000 since the beginning of the year. WFP announced drastic ration cuts due to funding constraints that affected all humanitarian agencies.

In South Darfur, the area south of Nyala particularly around Gereida (see related focus on Gereida page 5) was the scene of heavy fighting between GoS/militias and the SLA throughout the month. On 24 April, PDF and militias attacked and captured Joghana, forcing an estimated 27,000 IDPs and residents to flee. Attacks and counter-attacks also occurred in and around Dito (starting on 21 April) and Donkey Dereisa (captured by GoS on 16 April). As the SHO went to print, both Dito and Joghana were inaccessible and no information on the humanitarian situation could be gathered. Consequently, and humanitarian organizations in Gereida could not confirm the numbers of new arrivals from both locations. Government-SLA clashes were also reported in Jebel Marra and North Darfur. In West Darfur, the situation in the Zalingei-Bindisi corridor is becoming increasingly tense with a reported build-up of Chadian and Sudanese militias.

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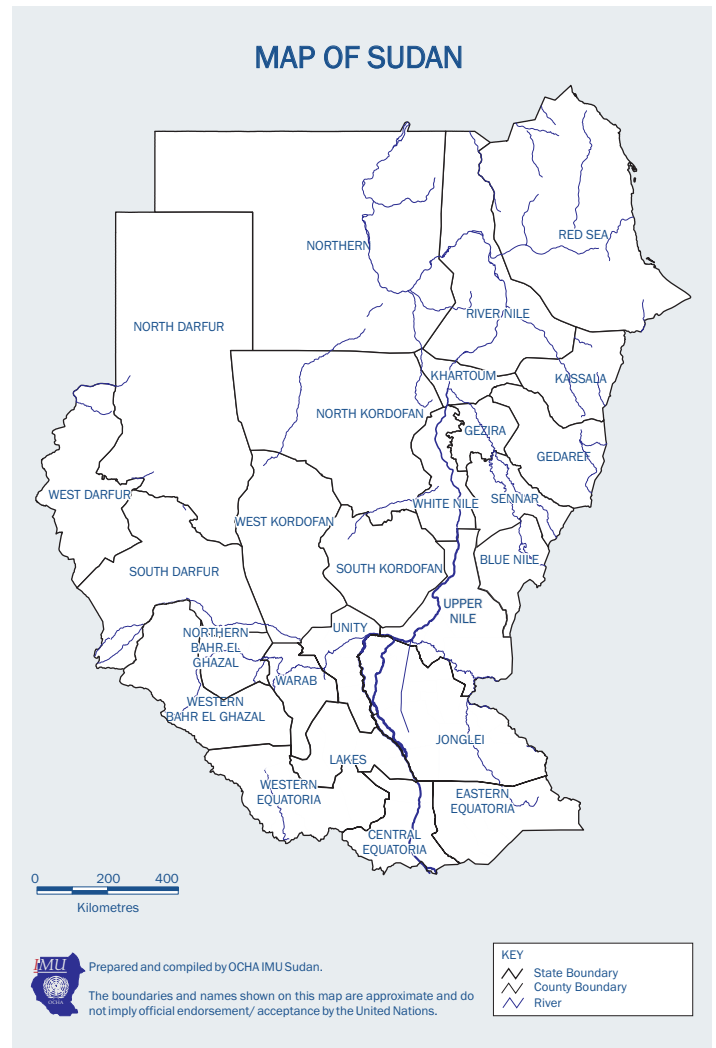
One of the most worrisome events during the month was the intensification of **intra-SLA fighting** in North Darfur. Internal conflict amongst the rebels interrupted access and humanitarian operations in the area around Tawilla and near Shangil Tobayi (North Darfur). A brutal attack on Tine and Tabra caused the displacement of up to 15,000 people and initial reports indicated severe violations including mass rape, beatings, lootings and summary executions. AU patrols have been denied access to some locations in the area by the Minawi faction of the SLA.

The SLA practice of **hijacking NGO cars** led to serious gaps in the provision of humanitarian assistance. Four key NGOs were forced to suspend operations in the Shangil Tobayi-Tabit-Gallap-Dar es Salaam areas and other NGOs have scaled down activities. During the month, some 80,000 people had no access to healthcare services. Food distributions, camp coordination and water and sanitation activities had to be suspended in Shangil Tobayi (11,650 IDPs) and Shadad (7,800 IDPs) camps. Around 1,000 children per month no longer receive routine vaccination, while the polio immunization campaign had to be suspended for 20,000 children under the age of five. As a result of the ambushes against NGO convoys in West Darfur, the Zalingei-Nertiti road and the road north of Geneina were declared 'no go', the latter only a few weeks after it had been re-opened.

The increase in such targeted attacks against humanitarian organizations is a growing concern. Particularly disturbing are reports of two NGO vehicles observed in South Darfur, with the roofs cut off and machine-guns mounted for combat use. The flags and emblems with the NGO and donor names were still in place. In his monthly report on Darfur to the Security Council, Secretary-General Kofi Annan called both SLA and GOS practices "a clear violation of the neutral status of the humanitarian operation" which puts humanitarian organizations in "great danger."



Photo credit: OXFAM/2005



On 4 April, Norwegian Refugee Council, which has acted as Kalma Camp coordinator for nearly two years, was ordered by local authorities to leave not only the camp but also the state of South Darfur entirely. The situation in and around **Kalma** camp became increasingly tense in the forced absence of a camp coordinator. The camp was temporarily declared UN 'no go' for one day on 25 April, following the alleged abduction of 50 IDP women by armed men outside Kalma camp while collecting firewood, and the theft of a WES vehicle inside the camp. All but two of the 50 women have been released and the AU is continuing to investigate the incident. GoS police are unwilling to continue participating in the firewood patrols due to the heightened insecurity.

The climate of violence continues to cause hardship and suffering for the civilian populations. Various reports have been received spoke of militias harassing, sexually abusing and terrorizing IDPs in Mershing, Shearia and Kalma camp in South Darfur and Mukjar in West Darfur.

Funding shortages are an additional major threat to the continuation of humanitarian operations in Darfur. Many activities have already been scaled down, including in the sectors of health, water and sanitation. WFP announced the drastic halving of food rations to 1,050 kilocalories per person as of 1 May, when the yearly lean season will begin, as in other parts of the country. UNICEF also raised the alarm on potential increasing malnutrition after two recent surveys in South Darfur indicated rates above the 15% emergency threshold.



SOUTHERN SUDAN

Overall, the security situation in Southern Sudan remains calm but pockets of insecurity continue to disrupt operations in certain areas. As the end of the dry season draws near, further efforts have been made to support organised returns to the south. The first organised return Bor Dinka to Jonglei is approaching completion while the organised return of 10,000 from South Darfur to their homelands in Northern Bahr El Ghazal state commenced this month. Spontaneous returns continue apace, and the Government of South Sudan has intensified its planning to return significant numbers before the rains. From Khartoum, state governments and private groups continued to organise North-South returns.

The overall security situation in Southern Sudan remained calm during the month with continued pockets of insecurity in parts of southern Sudan. The situation in LRA-affected areas remained tense with continuous reports of LRA movement in particular around Lasu, Morobo, and Yambio-Maridi area. In a positive development, in mid-April the GoSS leadership met with Vincent Otti at a location near DRC border to discuss the exit of LRA from Southern Sudan.

Of great concern were incidents of lawlessness involving SPLA soldiers. Mid-month, food distribution to 1,284 returnees in Aweil Town was interrupted by SPLA soldiers, when they forcefully took about 50 assorted bags of food items according. The SPLA soldiers were protesting the incomplete payment of their salaries and lack of food. Day-long negotiations to resolve the salary problem between the junior officers ended positively. Dispute over payments to SPLA soldiers has caused tensions in other parts of Southern Sudan. For example in Wau this resulted in tensions and consequent fighting among the Dinka and Nuer factions within SPLA barracks. SPLA soldiers in Yei have been involved in robberies and abuse of civilians, illegal tax collection on roads and looting of villages in and around Yei. Diversion of humanitarian aid and indiscipline amongst the armed forces is an issue of great concern to the humanitarian community that has been raised with the highest levels of the GoSS.

The start of the rainy season and migration of cattle from the Lakes area back to north has somewhat eased the continuing tensions between the Azande – Dinka in Western Equatoria. However, the situation further deteriorated when Dinka herdsmen reportedly ambushed a police patrol in Nabima village on their way back from Nadiangare area. In Western Equatoria, SPLA / JIU and UPDF are planning to conduct joint operations against LRA in the area. A number of cattle rustling incidents were reported during the month mainly in Mvolo and Wako areas which border the Lakes and Western Equatoria.

The situation in areas such as Pibor and Old Fangak remain tense due to the appointments of commissioners in Upper Nile and Jonglei. However, these issues continue to be addressed at the highest level within GoSS. Insecurity was also reported in Pochalla. It was reported that the Ethiopian army entered Pochalla in pursuit of members of the Anuak tribe. Several villages along the border were looted.

The security phase for much of Eastern and Central Equatoria has been reduced from Phase 4 to Phase 3. In Western Equatoria the phase has been raised from Phase 3 to Phase 4. Agencies will continue to require escorts for their outreach work.



A family reunites in Bor.

Returns

The movement of vulnerable Bor Dinka IDPs from Juba to Bor restarted during the month after a six week suspension to curb the spread of cholera. The barge departed Juba on 1 April with the USG/ERC Jan Egeland on board (see related story). New shelters were built to accommodate the new arrivals and UNHCR has begun the transport of the IDPs from the way station to their final destinations. The last group of IDPs from the Lologo way station should depart in early May, completing the return of this community of 12,000 people and their cattle.

The first group of 700 returnees from Southern Darfur departed Bileil IPD camp in Southern Darfur on 24 April, to arrive a week later in northern BEG. A second group of 1,600 departed on 2 May and IOM and partners plan to scale up to roughly 2,000 people a week for the remainder of the dry season. At this rate, the target of 10,000 organised returnees should be met by the end of May. IOM is providing transport and is working with UN teams to monitor the return.

In Unity State the first GoSS-sponsored return arrived in Bentiu this month. 3,082 people arrived on 32 buses and 16 trucks. The returnees have since dispersed to nine County's in Unity State namely: Rubkona, Leer, Koch, Ruweng, Alor, Mayom, Guit, Manyandit, Panyijar. At short notice, UN agencies in Bentiu assisted with registration for emergency assistance on their arrival. Unity state is expected to organise further returns in coming weeks.

A group of 635 returnees were stranded off Malakal's shore when their barge engine failed. Destined for Juba, the barge remained stranded for over a week, during which UNMIS RRR led partners in the coordination of food rations, drinking water, safety, barge disinfection and training of community leaders on health and sanitation. While stranded, two children on the barge drowned and one succumbed to cholera which broke out due to the sanitary conditions.

After suspending its programs due to insecurity in various locations UNHCR has now restarted the repatriation of refugees. During the month UNHCR airlifted 45 Sudanese refugees from the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya, to Padak in Jonglei State. The returnees have since dispersed to their respective Payams. In addition, CRS supported by USAID moved 570 people from Nimule to Bor and later to their respective Payams.



OUTBREAKS

CHOLERA

According to the last available figures on 21 April, there had been 11,955 reported cases of cholera in Southern Sudan and 314 deaths, since the outbreak started on 28 January (a case fatality rate of 2.63%). Nearly half of the cases were reported in the greater Juba area. The outbreak is now generally under control but has been expanding in eastern Equatoria towards Kapoeta and in Jonglei down the Sobat and Pibor rivers. WHO, UNICEF and OCHA's Emergency Preparedness & Response Unit (EP&R) are preparing a three-month cholera response plan for a potential 7,000–10,000 additional cases. Funds are being sought from the Commonwealth Environment Research Facilities (CERF) Programme (see related box on CERF funds for Darfur). The Ministry of Health (MoH) is also being supported to produce a proposal for cholera response in Juba, targeting longer-term requirement for improvement of surveillance and disease outbreak control, as well as improvement of water supply and environmental sanitation.

Worryingly, some 120 cases of acute watery diarrhoea, which requires the same treatment as cholera, have been recorded in the Khartoum area of Geraif. There have been seven fatalities. WHO mobilized resources available for strengthening surveillance in camps, and mobilize kits as per needs. Water chlorination and hygiene promotion in Geraif is ongoing.

MENINGITIS

As of 23 April, there were a total of 3,422 cases of meningitis reported and 357 deaths as of 1 January. The outbreak was so far confined to eight counties in three States (Western and Northern Bahr el Ghazal, and Warrab) but cases have been reported by MSF-F in Unity state. The task force that has been created in Juba to coordinate cholera-related activities has been expanded to include meningitis. The main issue of concern is the shortage of vaccines due to international demand on vaccines and quality-related problems.

The GoSS MoH also delivered a plane-load of medical supplies to the state on 25 April, including oily chloramphenicol, required for the treatment of meningitis. MSF and IRC have almost completed their vaccination campaign against meningitis in central Aweil East, covering 25,000 people. They have vaccinated 9,500 people in Malualkon, over 4,000 people in Akuem and are covering Wunlang and Madhol. However, there are no more vaccines in the pipeline. 190,000 bivalent vaccines are scheduled to arrive in Khartoum on 30 April. UNICEF has also secured 120,000 trivalent vaccines to cover the whole of Sudan, and which will take two to three weeks to arrive in country. MoH Lakes state, in collaboration with UNICEF, launched a mass measles immunization campaign on 27 April. The campaign will cover 596,626 children between 6 months and 15 years in Lakes state. Rumbek and Awerial Counties have been initially targeted. Ten cases of suspected meningitis have been reported in Meiram in late April by MoH in Kadugli. A MoH team is currently undertaking a vaccination campaign in the area.

WHO, in collaboration with MoH, is offering a four-day refresher course in Epidemiologic Surveillance and Emergency Preparedness medical personnel working in Khartoum IDPs camps. The programme is thought necessary to sharpen the medical surveillance capacity as the summer and rain approaches. The outbreaks of meningitis, diarrhoea, measles and cholera make this training all the more critical. Whilst Khartoum state has an emergency plan for many of these perennial diseases, the plan involves the essential participation of NGOs operating in the camps. The camps are high risks areas and therefore close monitoring for early detection of any outbreaks are essential.

AVIAN FLU

On 18 April 2006 the Federal MoH acknowledged the presence of avian influenza in Sudan. Two suspected human case was reported in Khartoum and laboratory tests carried out on 19 April by WHO experts proved it to be negative. MoH the Ministry of Animal Resources, the Ministry of Science and Technology, WHO, FAO, and other partners worked together to coordinate containment measures, increase surveillance and to ensure a effective response to the disease. A taskforce was created in March for avian and human influenza led by OCHA EP&R.

The public health priority at this stage is to raise awareness about the dangers of close contact with sick or dead birds. Exposure to infected poultry is considered most likely during slaughter, de-feathering, butchering and preparation of poultry for cooking. Consumers have been advised to avoid direct contact with infected poultry, or surfaces and objects contaminated by their faeces.

The level of alert regarding Avian Flu in Sudan is still high as outbreaks continue to be spotted in the poultry industry. Problems could arise in Darfur, the East and other parts of the country where returnees, IDPs and refugees depend on agriculture (including poultry) for survival.

ONLINE CONTACT DATABASE NOW AVAILABLE

A new online contact database for the UN, NGOs and key government authorities has been launched by the OCHA Information Management Unit (IMU) and is now available at <http://www.unsudanig.org/contacts/>. The database can be searched by various fields, such as name, job title, organisation, organisation acronym, sector and state, and query results can be printed or saved in a variety of formats: pdf or excel. There is also a link for updating or correcting existing information. Please direct your inquiries to ochasudan@un.org



FOCUS ON GEREIDA

CONTEXT AND RECENT HISTORY

Gereida is located 90km south of Nyala, in the Buram Locality. The population is mainly Massalit (Africans) and most of the land around Gereida belongs to this tribe. Although Massalit traditional leaders did not align with the parties to the South Darfur dispute, the conflict expanded to the area after the SLA launched two attacks on Buram in 2004.

Major Arab attacks on Gereida resumed in November 2005 and continued until now. Since then, and despite multiple attempts made by the AU and UNMIS to reconcile the parties, the conflict has extended to areas west, south and south-east of Gereida. Many other Arab tribes have aligned with the Fallatas in an apparent attempt to evict the SLA from the city. As now, more than 90 villages have been attacked and/or deserted according to the AU. Most recently, in April, three more towns and surrounding villages have been attacked by Government troops with alleged backing by militias.

CONSTRAINTS

As in many other places in Darfur the deployment of the AU generated great expectations among the population which has been challenging with a limited mandate and resources. After several villages were attacked by Arab militias in March, IDPs and Gereida residents organized a violent demonstration around the AU camp on 11 March. The crowd managed to enter the AU base, burned mattresses, destroyed part of the fence and some equipment, and injured two AU soldiers.

Access is still a major issue, and insecurity in and around Gereida as well as on the road to Nyala has on many occasions disrupted the provision of humanitarian assistance. Humanitarian agencies have had to evacuate the area on numerous occasions.

The situation worsened in early March 2006, when the GoS imposed a temporary fuel embargo on the area. These

restrictions were extended to local traders and to INGOs, and could have threatened the provision of water and other basic services to the entire population. Gereida and most of the surrounding villages rely on motorized boreholes that need significant quantities of fuel to function. In mid-March, OCHA and HAC met with the Minister of Social Affairs (also Deputy Wali of South Darfur) and an ad hoc solution was found, diverting an immediate crisis.

In April, the Government with alleged backing of militias launched a major offensive on SLA-held towns south of Nyala, stating it wanted to clear the road between Nyala and Buram. An unconfirmed number of the newly displaced from Dito and Joghana arrived in Nyala and Gereida. Humanitarian organisations in Gereida could not yet confirm the numbers of new arrivals from both locations, but it is estimated that there may be currently 120,000 IDPs in Gereida.

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION AND NEEDS

The Gereida population is estimated to be 30,000 to 50,000 residents and has now perhaps as many as 120,000 IDPs. The IDP population in Gereida doubled between November 2005 and March 2006, when it reached between 80,000-90,000 persons. A wave of about 20,000 IDPs arrived in November. Then in early 2006, 20,000 more IDPs arrived in small groups in Gereida, and in April tens of thousands more have been flowing in following attacks on Dito and Joghana.

There are only three partners working in a camp that has become as large as Kalma Camp Oxfam, ZOA and ICRC. In March, the humanitarian community was mobilized to increase humanitarian assistance to the affected populations in Gereida and Joghana, and significant steps had been achieved before the renewed hostilities, including food distributions. The main concerns still relate to the protection of IDPs and the possible re-displacement should clashes expand to Gereida itself. Priority concerns are the availability of safe water and food, and in NFI coverage for newly arrived IDPs. A number of NGOs have expressed interest in expanding operation to Gereida in food, health and water sectors.

Food	ICRC/ACF	ICRC will continue providing food to all IDPs until April or May 2006 after which ACF/WFP should take over to allow ICRC to allocate its resources to North Jebel Marra.
Health	ICRC	ICRC covers the health needs of the IDP camp population with a Primary Health Care Centre (currently 400 consultations/day).
Water and sanitation	OXFAM, ICRC, UNICEF, WES	OXFAM is running two boreholes that provide water to 80,000 IDPs and about 60,000 cattle. Average water available is 15 litres per day per person. A fuel embargo imposed by the GoS on SLA areas South of Nyala in March 2006 was lifted in late March but there are still concerns on the provision of water to IDPs. A WES team is now on the ground in Gereida with a drilling rig.
Nutrition	ICRC	ICRC runs a Community-based Therapeutic Centre and a Supplementary Feeding Centre in the IDP camp.
Livelihood	ZOA, FAO	ZOA distributes seeds and tools to IDPs and host populations and is engaged in cattle vaccination programmes.
Shelter/ NFIs	ICRC, OXFAM	ICRC and OXFAM are providing assistance to IDPs in the old and new camps as well as to Fallata IDPs north of Gereida.
Education	ZOA	ZOA and UNICEF have established 3 basic schools (grade 1 to 8) allowing 4,000 pupils to access education services.
Protection/ Advocacy	ICRC, OCHA, UNMIS	To reduce tensions and push for a peaceful settlement of the crisis OCHA and UNMIS are regularly engaged in discussions with key partners (SLA, Native administration, GoS, Arab Tribal leaders, AU) in and around Gereida.



UNITED NATIONS UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL (USG) FOR HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY RELIEF COORDINATOR (ERC), JAN EGELAND, VISITED SOUTHERN SUDAN ON 2-3 APRIL

After arriving in Juba from Uganda, Mr. Egeland traveled by helicopter to Terekeka, where he joined up with an IOM-organised barge transporting 350 IDPs from the Lologo way station in Juba to their homes in Bor, a 170 kilometre river journey. The USG spent the night on the barge where he was able to meet and talk with the IDPs on board, mostly women, children and the elderly. At 3 pm the next day, after an 18-hour journey, the barge arrived in Bor where the IDPs were received in the transit centre and joyously reunited with family members who returned previously. The USG toured the transit center, met with the Governor of Jonglei State and visited an MSF-run hospital that has been dealing with the recent outbreak of cholera in the area.

“This is truly one of the happy stories coming out of Sudan and it illustrates how much we can accomplish when we have the resources, the collective effort of the UN agencies and positive collaboration of the local authorities. On the barge I met a woman who fled the fighting in Bor when she was seven years old. She lost her parents in the war. She's now 27 and returning with her own children.”

From Bor, the USG flew to Rumbek where he had a constructive meeting with First Vice President and President of Southern Sudan Salva Kiir. The discussion addressed security concerns which have been affecting humanitarian operations in Southern Sudan, IDP returns and the best way to leverage available resources—both from the GoSS and the international community—to assist return communities, as well as the concerns about the NGO act which was recently passed into law.

Unfortunately, Mr. Egeland's visit to Sudan was cut short after he was prevented from continuing his planned mission to the Darfur region and Khartoum.

Despite having been granted a visa and having discussed the mission with Government officials, Mr. Egeland was informed that he was 'not welcome' in Darfur or Khartoum.



United Nations USG for Humanitarian Affairs and ERC, Jan Egeland, arrives in Bor

Furthermore, plans to continue his mission to Chad—where he was to visit IDP and refugee camps—also had to be canceled, as the Sudan Government failed to grant permission for the USG's plane to fly over Darfur to reach Chad.

“This is just one example of the 'administrative harassment' that the 14,000 aid workers in Darfur face every day,” noted Egeland.

Following a second invitation from the Sudanese Government, a second trip was arranged for early May, to raise awareness on protection concerns for civilians in Darfur, advocate for the respect of humanitarian space and to raise funds for the humanitarian situation in Sudan.



The IOM-organised barge transporting 350 IDPs from the Lologo way station in Juba to their homes in Bor.



KHARTOUM CAMPS

In late March, the Governor of Khartoum visited Al Fateh, the site 50 km outside of Khartoum where roughly 250,000 IDPs and urban squatters have been relocated since late 2005. During his visit, the Governor discussed plans for improvement including the establishment 10 water distribution points by the National Water Corporation (NWC) to replace the water bladders—which are costly to maintain—that have been provided by various international organisations. Other plans discussed by the Governor included:

- Extension of the tarmac road;
- Construction of four additional basic schools;
- Accelerating the completion of the four health centres and the 44-bed hospital;
- Speeding up the issuing of contracts from the land office for those already received plots; and
- To allocate plots to those persons waiting in the reception area within a week.

NGO Save the Children-UK (SC-UK) completed a project supporting 14 schools in various IDP camps and settlements in Khartoum at the end of March. The project provided educational materials and a teacher stipend and benefited approximately 13,000 pupils and 2,078 basic school teachers.

Education in Khartoum camps is completely dependant the humanitarian intervention of national, international NGOs and religious organisations. The closure of this programme is likely to exacerbate a situation where almost 48% of children of school age are not attending school. SC-UK also conducted an initial assessment of the project and the educational situation in Khartoum camps and squatter areas.



A water bladder at Al Fateh camp.

Some of the key points were:

- Children are kept out of school because their labour is critical to family survival;
- Teachers face a variety of obstacles such as being untrained, unmotivated and unpaid;
- Lack of educational materials and textbooks;
- All above factors render education prohibitively expensive in time and money for parents;
- The cost of maintaining household income for food and health care takes precedence over children's education.

As of 1 May, OCHA will reduce its activities on Khartoum Camps issues handing over to recovery and urban development partners. OCHA will have fewer resources dedicated to carry out much-needed coordination activities.





ACCESS: EASTERN SUDAN AND DARFUR

Restrictions on access for UN personnel are on the increase throughout the East and Transitional Areas, as well as Darfur. UN agencies are being denied access and/or harassed in Kassala, Red Sea, Blue Nile States and Darfur, despite the existence of a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), granting freedom of movement to UN humanitarian and mission personnel. In the East, UN operations are at a virtual halt since agencies are being denied travel permissions to the field even though restrictions on UN travel are in direct contravention to the SOFA agreement. OCHA has had to temporarily suspended activities in the State following the expulsion of the UN Humanitarian Liaison Officer.

Lack of freedom of movement is also a problem in Darfur. UN staff were regularly harassed by authorities and the Nyala airport. On three occasions, WFP helicopters were refused permission by National Security officers to disembark passengers in Kabkabiya, North Darfur. As an organized evacuation could not be guaranteed in case of insecurity, WFP has decided to relocate all its staff from the area. This is another blow for humanitarian programmes in North Darfur, following reduced activities in the Tawilla-Shangil Tobayi-Dar es Salaam corridor due to insecurity. In Zalingei, HAC announced on 25 April that SOFA would only be applied to UNMIS although

UN humanitarian agencies are explicitly covered under paragraphs 64 and 65 of the agreement. WFP and UNICEF have also had staff expelled

A special Committee has been set up this week by the Federal Government to interface with the UN and to address the access restrictions imposed on the UN in the East and elsewhere. A first meeting with the UN was held on 23 April, and continued to meet in the last week of April. Subsequent talks will take place at the highest levels and involve the Special Representative of the Secretary-General Jan Pronk.

In a positive breakthrough in Abyei, on 4 April, the new National Security (NS) Director announced that access restrictions for UN humanitarian agencies to areas north of Abyei had been unconditionally lifted. SRRC/HAC is now responsible for issuing travel permits to the NGOs. SRRC/HAC in turn stated that NGOs would not need travel permits in the Abyei area although NGO movement outside the Abyei area will still be subject to travel permits delivered by SRRC/HAC and approved by NS. As a result, various field missions to Misseriya nomad settlements north of Abyei have been able to assess the situation and to undertake registration and food distributions, drill boreholes and distribute non-food items. However, UNMIS civilian components continue to be denied access despite a verbal agreement with the director of national security.

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS OF NOTE IN MAY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
30 APRIL	1 MAY	2 MAY	3 MAY	4 MAY	5 MAY	6 MAY
	11:00 Khartoum State Interagency, FAR 14:00 UN Sector Coordinators, UNDP 15:15 UN/Donor Briefing, UNDP 16:30 Interagency Coordination, UNDP	UNMIS UNMO Training, OCHA CMCoord., Khartoum UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador Johann Koss, four-time Olympic gold medal speed skater from Norway, visits Juba and Khartoum Census Technical Working Group planning and preparing for the National Population Census November 2007 UNFPA and Ministry of Health Southern Sudan launch campaign to end obstetric fistula problems, Juba UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour visits Sudan	World Press Freedom Day	14:00 Information and Advocacy WG, OCHA		
7 MAY	8 MAY	9 MAY	10 MAY	11 MAY	12 MAY	13 MAY
12:00 Return and Reintegration Working Group Meeting, OCHA						
14 MAY	15 MAY	16 MAY	17 MAY	18 MAY	19 MAY	20 MAY
12:00 Return and Reintegration Working Group Meeting, OCHA	11:00 Khartoum State Interagency, FAR 14:00 UN Sector Coordinators, UNDP 15:15 UN/Donor Briefing, UNDP 16:30 Interagency Coordination, UNDP	AMIS CIMIC Training, El Fasher, Darfur UNMIS UNMO Training, OCHA CMCoord., Khartoum	AMIS CIMIC Training, El Fasher, Darfur World Telecommunication Day 14:00 Information and Advocacy WG, OCHA			
21 MAY	22 MAY	23 MAY	24 MAY	25 MAY	26 MAY	27 MAY
12:00 Return and Reintegration Working Group Meeting, OCHA	International Day for Biological Diversity					
28 MAY	29 MAY	30 MAY	31 MAY	1 JUNE	2 JUNE	3 JUNE
12:00 Return and Reintegration Working Group Meeting, OCHA	11:00 Khartoum State Interagency, FAR 14:00 UN Sector Coordinators, UNDP 15:15 UN/Donor Briefing, UNDP 16:30 Interagency Coordination, UNDP		World No Tobacco Day 14:00 Information and Advocacy WG, OCHA			