



June 2022



THIS WORLD REFUGEE DAY

THE RIGHT TO SEEK SAFETY IS ENDURING AND URGENTLY IMPORTANT

Twenty-five years ago, on the banks of the remote Bala Murghab River, I witnessed and supported a community of 8,000 Afghan Turcomen who sought and accessed safety from violence.

Villages in northern Afghanistan were falling in rapid succession to a relentless Taliban surge, and the tightknit community of Marechak forded the river and ensured their safety. The Murghab River was not just a natural barrier, but an international boundary between Afghanistan and Turkmenistan. When the Marechaki families crossed it, they exercised their right to seek and enjoy asylum, and they triggered the international obligation of their new host state to not repulse them, and to grant them safety.

If war is a failure of our international rules-based system, asylum is a small victory — a safety net which recognizes that innocents should have the means to escape horrors and to receive protection. Thus, the right to seek safety is a right that you exercise when your other rights are violated. It is realistic, rather than idealistic. It saves lives and it provides respite — every day, and for millions.

Today, some 100 million people around the world are forcibly displaced by conflict and persecution. Twenty-seven million of them are refugees. They are the shards of our fractured international order.

On this day of 20 June, the United Nations marks World Refugee Day, where we commemorate the strength and resilience of people forced to flee. We reaffirm that seeking asylum is a human right. Anyone fleeing persecution, conflict, or human rights abuses has a right to seek protection in another country. UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is restating five core principles that have saved these and countless other lives: the right to seek asylum; safe access; no pushbacks; no discrimination; and humane treatment.

Granting asylum is not a favor. It is an international obligation. But it is more than that: it is a human reflex. Throughout my career, I have seen countries, and more importantly, people, open their borders, their homes and indeed their hearts to strangers in danger.

HIGHLIGHTS

- World Refugee Day (PG. 1)
- Livestock distribution by FAO helps create peace between Refugees and host communities (PG. 3)
- 2023-2025 UNSDCF elaboration process (PG. 4)
- News from UN Agencies, Funds and Programs (PG. 5)



From the rainforests of Kisangani and Gueckedou, the mehmankhaneh of Mashhad and Peshawar, the mountains of Sabzak and Chouf, the beaches of Lesbos and Tripoli, and the downtowns of Bogota and Amman, I have witnessed trauma, succour and humanity.

Compassion knows no boundaries.

Yet, 100 million people forced from home is not normal. Safety nets are not solutions. The best intentions can run dry if there is no end in sight, and if support is limited and diminishing.

So even as we honour the resilience of those forced to flee, and thank those who host them, we also intensify our efforts to strengthen international solidarity and to work with others to bring about peace and development.

South Sudan, where I now work, manifests the tragedy of massive and prolonged displacement but also points towards a more decent and hopeful way ahead. Decades of war have pushed over 2 million South Sudanese out of the country, and conflict and climate crises have displaced another 2 million within its borders.

Yet this new nation, despite poverty and instability, has itself opened its doors to 343,000 refugees and asylum seekers. Acting with generosity and alacrity, it has provided security and, where it can, donated large tracts of black cotton soil farmland.

Working as a team, the international community in South Sudan is taking an approach that ensures that peace, humanitarian action and development are in sync, and pushes us in the direction of solutions. We are already seeing results.

Last year, for example, we advocated for international support and succeeded in obtaining a US\$98 million grant from the World Bank to support both hosts and refugees — a model gesture of support for a consistent asylum nation.

And South Sudanese refugees themselves are beginning to return. Over half a million have repatriated since the signing of the revitalized peace agreement (RARCSS) in 2018.

They are at the vanguard of peace and represent a logical conclusion to exile. For decades safely protected in Uganda, Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya and the Democratic Republic of Congo, they are tentatively but emphatically coming home.

As an elderly man in Raja, northern South Sudan, said to me last year: we thank Sudan for giving us refuge, but this is home; this is the place where I walk the streets with my dignity intact.

Working as a harmonized UN team, we are joining up the pieces, and building what we call ‘pockets of hope’ — places where we honor people’s decisions and follow their lead, to build development and peace.

But for a person forced to flee, it begins with safety. Crossing a border, receiving protection and support, picking up the pieces. When a displaced person feels safe, she can recuperate; and her nation can have the space to rebuild and reconcile.

Push that person back, you create insecurity but nurture that person until they choose to return voluntarily, and you have forged an agent of peace and stability.

This World Refugee Day, let us recall that every day, millions of ordinary and unsung people are making sure that those in peril can find safety and refuge. And let us reaffirm our collective, global responsibility to uphold this principle, and to enable the refugee to heal, learn, work, thrive; and when the conditions that led to flight have lifted, to find a durable solution.

*This article is written by Arafat Jamal
Resident Representative - UNHCR South Sudan*



GOAT AND SHEEP DISTRIBUTION BY FAO HELPS CREATE PEACE BETWEEN REFUGEES AND HOST COMMUNITY IN MABAN

Cradling her small baby in one arm, Hijou Alia Memo bends over to pat one of her sheep with the other hand. Four other adult sheep and two lambs wander around the dusty area surrounding Alia's tukal.

These sheep are precious to Alia who lives in the Kaya refugee camp in Maban county.

"Before I was suffering. I have many children who were living without food to eat and had no clothes to wear," says the mother of five.

Now, her children are benefiting from the extra nutrition provided by the sheep milk.

Alia was one of 300 refugees in Maban county who received five sheep or goats each in December 2021, through a Norway-funded restocking programme conducted by FAO.

The goal of the distribution is to help vulnerable people establish a livestock-based livelihood, or to re-establish their livestock business if they previously had animals but lost them due to displacement, raiding or disease.

FAO vaccinates and deworms the sheep and goats before distribution, and the beneficiaries are trained on the basics of livestock health and animal husbandry.

Small ruminants are the kind of livestock customarily owned by women in South Sudan. They are less likely to cause conflict or be raided, and they reproduce quickly.

But it's not only refugees who are benefiting from the FAO livestock restocking.

In Maban county, 400 beneficiaries in the host community also received sheep and goats. Among both the refugee and host community, the most vulnerable members of the community were selected to receive the small ruminants, including single mothers, widows, people with disabilities and senior citizens.

Hahoz Wardu, 85 years old, is one of the beneficiaries in the host community.

"The children in my family go to school, they are even dressed with clothes we bought because of the milk we sell in the market, and also the children are drinking the milk from the goats," he says.

Wardu says the small ruminants improve life for the family, so if a sheep or goat gets sick, he will prioritize buying medicine for the animal.

"When we see conflict around refugee settlements, it's often due to competition over limited resources," says Meshack Malo, the FAO Representative in South Sudan.

"By providing members of both the refugee community and host community with access to animals which can help build their livelihood, FAO is doing its part to promote peace in the region.

" Furthermore, when refugees have access to livestock, it allows them to integrate into the local economy.

Alazira Alamen is a community leader in charge of security at the Gendrasa refugee camp. He says the distribution of sheep and goats to some community members is a sustainable way of helping refugees adapt to life away from home.

" This is normal activity for all our people. We traditionally practice agriculture for income and also producing animals. The people have experience keeping livestock," says Alamen.

For her part, Alia is already looking forward to what she can accomplish with her flock of sheep.

Alia received five sheep in December, and already two of them have given birth, bringing the total number to seven.

"In the next three years my sheep will multiply themselves by giving birth," she says.

"I will always take care of them and with time, I can even sell sheep in the market and start buying cows from the profit I will make."



2023-2025 UNSDCF ELABORATION PROCESS: UNCT REVIEWS CONFIGURATION PAPER, GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT SCHEMA AND M&E LEARNING PLAN



DSRSG/RC/HC Sara Beysolow Nyanti speaking at the opening of the UNSDCF review meeting. Photo Credit: RCO

The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) conducted a workshop on 30th June 2022 in Juba to review progress towards the development of the new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2023-2025.

The one-day workshop was attended by Heads of Agencies, Program Management Team (PMT) members, Operation Management Team (OMT) Co-chairs, United Nations Communications Group (UNCG) Co-chairs, Monitoring and Evaluation Working Group (M&E WG) Co-chairs, and Result Group (RG) Co-leads. Participants deliberated on the UNSDCF resource envelope and funding mobilisation strategy, on enhancing UN cooperation and collaboration, on Governance and a management schema including a UN/Government Joint Steering Committee to effectively support the implementation of UN's commitments in the UNSDCF 2023-2025 and contribute to the national development priorities. The strategic discussion was informed by the analysis from the UNCT configuration exercise.

“It’s no longer news that South Sudan is faced with the worst ever humanitarian crisis, but its people, especially children, need to be availed with opportunities to learn, lead, decide and thrive for the Sustainable development goals to be meaningful”, stressed DSRSG/RC/HC Sara Nyanti Beysolow at the opening of the workshop.

At the same meeting, the M&E Working Group discussed the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) plan and formulation of the UNSDCF Joint Workplans and Joint Programmes. The team deliberated on key MEL activities to support the planning, implementation, monitoring, and reporting of the UNSDCF including joint monitoring



Participants following the deliberations at the review meeting. Photo Credit: RCO

missions, annual planning and review processes, support to national surveys, strengthening national data ecosystems and M&E capacity, and integration of lessons learned throughout the programming cycle and the UNSDCF evaluation.

The plan is to have the final UNSDCF document signed off by UNCT and Government in September; followed by the formulation of joint workplans and multi-year funding framework by December 2022 for implementation to start in January 2023.



NEWS FROM UN AGENCIES, FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES

PROVIDING EMOTIONAL SUPPORT THROUGH REMOTE MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

It is 8:30 in the morning, Nyalam receives the first call of the day. “Hello, welcome to South Sudan Regional Hotline for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support”.

When a caller begins to narrate how he or she feels, Nyalam listens attentively until the caller finishes talking, she then responds with empathy and understanding, reassuring the caller about confidentiality of their talk. She assesses if the caller needs more emotional support after provision of psychological first aid (PFA) or needs referral to other services. She will then schedule a follow-up call at an agreed date and time.



Nyalam checks her records for any follow-up on referrals. Photo Credit: IOM

“This is how my day normally starts”, says Nyalam, as she puts down the phone. “People call from all around the Upper Nile to express their feelings and I listen, respond and support them in a way that will help them overcome their problems” Nyalam continues.

During the Global COVID-19 Pandemic, the International Organization for Migration and partners introduced remote Mental Health and Psycho-social Support Services (MHPSS) through the operation of a Regional Hotline for MHPSS in South Sudan to continue responding to people’s growing MHPSS needs with a toll-free line.

Nyalam Thomas, a psychosocial mobile team member, is among the eight counsellors trained in Malakal to listen to displaced, conflict or flood-affected individuals and provide remote emotional support or refer them to available and accessible services.

Read the full story online: <https://southsudan.iom.int/stories/providing-emotional-support-through-remote-mental-health-and-psychosocial-support>

VITAMIN A SUPPLEMENTATION: A SIMPLE BUT CRUCIAL WAY TO HELP CHILDREN SURVIVE IN SOUTH SUDAN



In Kodok, a remote village on the Western banks of the White Nile in South Sudan, the call of a loudspeaker can be heard piercing the quiet post-rain atmosphere. The young woman speaker repeats the message to the community over and over while her two companions are going door-to-door armed with bottles of tiny red and blue capsules full of Vitamin A supplements and deworming tablets.

“Teams are moving from house-to-house, please receive them to have let them give your children Vitamin A and deworming tablets. Vitamin A increase protection for your children and deworming gets rid of stomach worms,” says Khamisa, a community social mobiliser who works to promote health campaigns and support health and nutrition initiatives in the village.

Vitamin A is crucial for children under 5 years old to boost their immune systems and helps prevent disease, infections, and blindness. In countries where children do not receive enough Vitamin A in their diets through fresh fruits, vegetables and other vitamin rich foods, high rates of Vitamin A deficiency can be life threatening.

For the last decade in South Sudan, UNICEF has supported the Ministry of Health to conduct bi-annual Vitamin A supplement campaigns bundled with deworming treatment across the country. Coverage rates of Vitamin A in children 6 months to 5 years have improved from around 4 per cent to more than 90 per cent.

Read more: [Vitamin A supplementation | UNICEF South Sudan](#)

NEWS FROM UN AGENCIES, FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES

PROVIDING YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP THROUGH SKILLS TRAINING BRINGS SMILES TO A FEMALE SEX WORKER

Shabab Le Shabab, with funding from United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), through Impact Health Organization (IHO) is empowering young women and men, including key population groups in Yei, Nzara, and Maban to be self-reliant through life skills.

The youth in these areas are mostly involved in informal activities. Some of these activities make them particularly vulnerable. The training of young women and men from community-based clubs and young female sex workers focuses on developing business and entrepreneurship skills. This project aims to bridge the skills gap among young women and men and foster self-employment opportunities.



Women baking local cakes, commonly known as Kabis. Photo Credit: UNFPA

Anita (not real name) is a sex female worker in Anzara and a beneficiary of such a program. Anita is a single mother of three, her youngest son is three years old. Life has been challenging for Anita and her family, especially as she is raising three children by herself. She said that there are moments she was unable to make money from prostitution due to the challenging nature of being a sex worker.

Anita says a while back she had considered having a business of her own one day, but due to a lack of capital and skills needed in operating a business, she was unable to do so, this was why she seized the opportunity to be part of the entrepreneurship training, especially in baking and soap making, which she considered as a life-changing moment for her and her three children. Anita and her cousin Suzan have ventured into baking bread at home and selling it to people in the market of Nzara. *“I have realized working for myself and selling bread is an honour compared to selling my body. I get clean money now to feed my children”*, she said.

Anita has since stopped working as a sex worker, as she has been committed to running her baking business. Her desire is to empower more girls, especially single mothers to have an alternative source of income.

Anita is among other women beneficiaries of the UNFPA supported project on entrepreneurship training through Impact Health Organization (IHO) and Shabab le Shabab.

UNESCO TRAINS JOURNALISM STUDENTS ON THE MEDIA LEGAL FRAMEWORK



Final Year Journalism students pose for a group photo at the University of Juba at the start of the two-day workshop.

Photo Credit: UNESCO

UNESCO in partnership with the National Press Club South Sudan and University of Juba have trained 35 final year journalism students from three higher institutions of learning in South Sudan (namely: University of Juba, Starford International University and Kampala University –Juba Distance Learning Center) on media legal frameworks and basic journalism skills.

The workshop was organized under the theme:

“Empowering upcoming journalists with professional skills through training and mentorship”. The training focused on media legal frameworks at the national, regional, and global level. Other topics discussed included conflict sensitive reporting, gender reporting, ethical and accurate reporting, physical safety and digital security for journalists.

Speaking at the opening of the event, Mr. Ochaya James, Executive Director, National Press Club South Sudan, said his organization was working to empower journalists in South Sudan. He said the two-day training session was crucial because participants would learn new professional skills.

“In South Sudan journalists often get discouraged due to an unfavorable media environment, which is characterized by – harassment and censorship. I encourage you to go ahead. Do not give up. Journalism is a call –you are called to –serve the society through journalism,” Mr. Ochaya told the participants.

NEWS FROM UN AGENCIES, FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES

AIMING TO STOP THE RISK OF CHOLERA TRANSMISSION IN JUBA

With support from WHO and Health Cluster partners, the Ministry of Health is targeting to vaccinate over 633 000 people against cholera in Juba County of South Sudan.

“The oral cholera vaccine (OCV) confer immunity up to a maximum of three years. We appreciate the efforts of the state Ministry of Health and partners in organizing the campaign”, said Honorable Yolanda Awel Deng Juach, Minister of Health, Republic of South Sudan.

“It is a high time another round of OCV is conducted to prevent the occurrence of cholera in Juba. And I urge everyone eligible for this vaccine to receive the oral cholera vaccine to protect themselves and their loved ones from Cholera”, said Hon. Awel.



Cholera is a killer disease, but can be prevented if people have access to clean drinking water and adequate toilet facilities. It affects both children and adults and can lead to death within hours if untreated. Cholera spreads through contaminated food and water, and it can spread quickly and widely in overcrowded, unclean conditions.

The country has faced several outbreaks of cholera affecting vulnerable populations living in internally displaced people’s (IDP) camps, urban informal settlements, cattle camps as well as rural populations, island dwellers, and communities along the river Nile.

From 2014-2017 South Sudan reported over 28 600 cases of cholera leading to 644 deaths. There were no cholera cases confirmed from 2018 - 2021. Currently, an outbreak of cholera was declared in Bentiu, Unity State, on 7 May 2022, with a positive culture result obtained from National Public Health Laboratory on 14 April 2022.

Oral cholera vaccination campaigns, along with water, sanitation, and hygiene and other interventions including reinforced messages on safe drinking water, hygiene, and sanitation (WASH), are critical to reverse the current cholera trends in South Sudan and achieve the global target of attaining a 90% reduction of cholera deaths by 2030.

Read more: [Aiming to stop the risk of cholera transmission in Juba | WHO | Regional Office for Africa](#)

UN WOMEN PREPARES WOMEN FOR THE LAUNCH OF WOMEN’S NETWORKS IN THE SECURITY SECTOR



Some of the participants at the sensitization workshop for the South Sudan People’s Defense Forces.

Photo Credit: UN Women South Sudan Country Office

As part of South Sudan’s ongoing security sector reform, UN Women together with UNDP, UNMISS and the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare are supporting the establishment of women’s networks for the security sector institutions. These are networks that the women have wished for a long time.

To kickstart the networks and to forge strong relations among the women in the security sector institutions, UN Women with the support of UNMISS, UNDP and the Ministry of Gender, Child, and Social Welfare organized workshops for the female officers of South Sudan People’s Defense Forces (SSPDF), South Sudan National Police Service (SSNPS) and National Prisons Services of South Sudan (NPSSS) in April-May 2022.

“These networks do not only aim at bringing women together within their own and with the other security institutions but will also serve as an effective tool to advocate for gender responsiveness in the security institutions”, says UN Women’s Country Representative Peterson Magoola.

The official launch of the women’s networks in SSPDF, SSNPS and NPSSS together with a human rights training will take place during the coming months.

UNESCO HOLDS A TWO-DAY WORKSHOP FOR DUTY BEARERS IN JUBA ON THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN THE CONSTITUTION MAKING PROCESS

UNESCO together with the Association for Media Development in South Sudan (AMDISS) and the National Ministry for Information, Communication, Telecommunication and Postal Services organized a two-day workshop to strengthen capacities for duty bearers on the role of media during the constitution making process.

The workshop drew participants from all the 10 States and the three Administrative Areas of Abyei, Pibor and Ruweng respectively. Among the participants were 10 Director Generals, representatives from the National Constitutional Review Commission, academia, media managers and media development partners.

Speaking at the workshop, Hon. Moyiga Nduru, Information Commissioner, cautioned the participants not to ignore journalists and see them as an after-thought during the constitution making process, but rather work hand in hand with the media at all levels of the process to achieve the goal of having a people-driven and inclusive permanent Constitution in South Sudan. Hon. Nduru also emphasized that the media is the fourth arm of the State and as such it plays a critical role in our communities and ensuring access to information.



UNESCO'S Country Representative Mr. Julius Banda in his opening remarks emphasized the important role Director Generals play to encourage the free flow of information and ideas by word or image. "Today marks the beginning of a renewed partnership with the duty bearers to overcome some of the obstacles to freedom of expression which is a universal right of every citizen. "Freedom of expression is a driver for development and a bridge to achieving the agenda 2030 on the Sustainable development goals", stated Mr. Julius.

WITH RISING COSTS AND REDUCING FOOD SECURITY, MOTHERS BATTLE TO KEEP THEIR CHILDREN WELL NOURISHED

In the heart of one of South Sudan's POC camps a mother of eight with triplet babies relies on UNICEF services for keeping them healthy and thriving

When 35-year-old Vivian received the ultrasound for her sixth pregnancy in a clinic inside the Malakal Protection of Civilians (POC) camp in the Northern part of South Sudan, she was surprised when they told her she was having twins. When she gave birth in July 2021, Vivian and her whole community were even more shocked when three babies were born safely and in good health.

"It was a gift from God when I had triplets," she said. "There are two girls and a boy. Their names are Achan, Angar and Abraham and they are very easy babies." But Vivian and her husband survive on odd jobs and humanitarian support. Her husband does construction jobs in the camp – and they find it more and more difficult to keep their eight children healthy and thriving. Food rations from WFP have been reduced and two of the triplets have been diagnosed with acute malnutrition. After Angar was treated for moderate wasting, a type of malnutrition putting children at high risk of dying, her sister Achan was screened and found to be severely wasted.

Read more: [With rising costs and reducing food security mothers battle to keep their children well-nourished | UNICEF](#)

