# Sudan Situation:

## Regional Refugee Response Plan

Preliminary Summary & Inter-Agency Requirements (May - October 2023)

### Key figures

**134***
INTER-AGENCY PARTNERS

**860,000**
REFUGEES AND RETURNEES PROJECTED BY OCTOBER 2023

**$445 million**
TOTAL INTER-AGENCY REQUIREMENTS

**In support of**
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC
CHAD
EGYPT
ETHIOPIA
SOUTH SUDAN

* Partners are counted as unique for each country if they participate in the response in different countries.

### Situation overview

This Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP) summary outlines the preliminary inter-agency response and activities to support countries' efforts to protect and assist refugees and refugee returnees, and others, coming from Sudan. It includes initial estimated financial requirements for six months for 134 partners (including UN Agencies, national and international NGOs and civil society actors), to respond to the crisis, working alongside host governments.

On 15 April, fighting erupted in Khartoum, Sudan, between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF). Fighting was also reported in other areas of the country including Merowe in the Northern State as well as Darfur. Despite repeated promises of a ceasefire, hostilities have lasted for 18 consecutive days, with the death toll tragically exceeding 500 people, along with nearly 4,600 wounded since the conflict began. Many more are thought to have died due to the disruption of critical services, including health care[1].

Above: Hundreds of Sudanese recently arrived in Chad on 2 May 2023 © Colin Delfosse/UNHCR

The humanitarian situation in Sudan is dire due to food, water, and fuel shortages, limited access to communications and electricity, and skyrocketing prices of essential items. Rising costs of fuel as well as transport makes it increasingly difficult for people to leave conflict-affected areas. Access to health care has also been critically impacted by the conflict, with direct attacks on healthcare facilities as well as severe shortages of medicines and vital supplies. The clashes are adding another layer of complexity to an already challenging humanitarian situation in Sudan, as almost 16 million people were estimated to be in need of humanitarian assistance in 2023 before the crisis started.

Prior to the crisis, Sudan, which has a long record of generously hosting, was home to over 1 million refugees - the second highest refugee population in Africa - mainly from South Sudan, Eritrea, Syria, and Ethiopia, as well as the Central African Republic, Chad and Yemen. Over the years, several bouts of conflict have also forced people to flee within Sudan, with over 3.7 M people internally displaced and over 800,000 Sudanese refugees seeking safety across borders, mainly in the neighbouring countries of Chad, South Sudan, Egypt, Central African Republic and Ethiopia.

The current fighting has already displaced over 330,000 people inside Sudan. In addition, over 100,000 refugees and returnees have left Sudan. Among those fleeing are also South Sudanese returning home in adverse conditions and others who were themselves refugees in Sudan fleeing into neighbouring countries. The most significant cross-border movements so far have been Sudanese refugees arriving in Chad and Egypt, and South Sudanese returning to South Sudan. This includes more than 30,000 new arrivals in Chad, 30,000 in South Sudan, 47,000 Sudanese in Egypt and around have accessed Egypt and around 10,000 new arrivals in CAR. Ethiopia has seen 11,000 new arrivals, while in Libya and Eritrea contingency planning for a comparatively smaller number of arrivals is ongoing.

Without a resolution to the crisis, more people will be forced to flee in search of safety and basic assistance. In consultation with the concerned governments and partners, UNHCR has been undertaking coordinated contingency planning for new arrivals (refugees, returning refugees and others, including third country nationals) to CAR, Chad, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Egypt, Eritrea and Libya, and has arrived at an initial planning figure of some 860,000 people that may flee to the 7 neighbouring countries. The figures are projections used for financial and operational planning. Of these some 580,000 would be Sudanese, some 235,000 would be refugees previously hosted by Sudan returning to their home countries in adverse conditions, and 45,000 refugees of other nationalities hosted by Sudan. Among these movements, there will also be a smaller number of third country nationals who are seeking safety. UNHCR is working hand-in-hand with IOM at several border crossings to help all people fleeing Sudan, to register those in need of protection, identify the most vulnerable and help determine the different population groups leaving the country.

Given the very fluid situation, with the number of new arrivals steadily increasing, this document outlines the preliminary needs. A full-fledged Regional RRP will be launched next week, which may include revised budgets, to take into account the results of ongoing interagency missions to border locations and multisector needs assessments.

[1] https://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/sudan-clashes-between-saf-and-rsf-flash-update-no-9-2-may-2023

# Regional Protection Needs

Countries neighbouring Sudan impacted by this new emergency are already hosting large refugee and internally displaced populations. The majority remain severely underfunded. Hosting countries will need additional support to provide protection and critical life-saving assistance. Initial assessments show that the new asylum-seekers, refugees, refugee returnees and other arrivals' most urgent needs identified to date are water, food, shelter, health, and core relief items. In terms of protection, the current priority activities are the registration of new arrivals and ensuring that mechanisms are in place to try and prevent and respond to gender-based violence and ensure alternative care services for refugee children. Due to the nature of the violence, psychosocial support for children and parents is a priority.

The impact of the conflict beyond the borders, including on the commercial side, such as the disruption of existing trade and supply chains, and inflation, are already creating increased hardship for the most vulnerable host communities, a situation that could fuel tensions between refugees and host populations and destabilize the whole region.

Most new arrivals are women and children. In **Chad**, some new arrivals are still staying out in the open or under trees, while others are sleeping in makeshift shelters close to the border. Urgent actions are needed to provide essential protection and humanitarian assistance, maintain vital assistance to vulnerable communities in eastern Chad, and avoid inter-community tensions. They need clean water, food, and necessities, including mattresses, soap, cooking utensils, and latrines. Children and parents need psychosocial support. The World Food Programme is already reporting exponential increases in the cost of basic foodstuff and fuel in the region receiving new arrivals. This area in eastern Chad was already hosting a large number of refugees and facing huge challenges prior to the latest conflict. For example, health partners were reporting a 65 per cent increase in admissions to acute malnutrition treatment programmes in some pre-existing refugee sites. Since then, the price of sorghum has more than doubled as a result of the conflict. The poorest families amongst both refugees and hosts will face a huge challenge to feed themselves. In this context, the arrival of more than 100,000 additional refugees risks increasing the pressure on already overburdened services, exacerbates competition for scarce resources and could fuel tensions between communities.

Authorities have requested assistance in relocating the new arrivals to camps far from the border. Yet, most of the existing camps are at capacity and can only accommodate the new arrivals with substantial prior investment in infrastructure and essential services. UNHCR and partners will need to scale up capacities in existing camps and establish up to five new camps with basic amenities, infrastructure, and services to accommodate the new arrivals.

In **South Sudan**, many arrivals are very vulnerable, exhausted and in need of immediate assistance. Most of them also need support to continue their journey to intended destinations in South Sudan. The vast majority of people are arriving in Renk by boat on the river Nile, making the emergency response and onward movement logistically challenging.

Those seeking assistance include older people, people with disabilities, pregnant women, and female heads of households with young children and large families.

South Sudan already faces a challenging humanitarian situation in which peace and security remain fragile. Intercommunal violence, food insecurity, and the severe impact of climate change present constant challenges. The 2023 Humanitarian Response Plan estimated that 9.4 million people in South Sudan were in need humanitarian assistance prior to the latest arrival of refugees and returnees. Protection concerns remain high for people of all genders and ages and South Sudan remains one of the worst food insecurity emergencies in the world. According to a prior intersectoral needs assessment, 75 per cent of the returnee households reported food as a priority need, followed by shelter (61 per cent) and health care (53 per cent).

Mental health and psychosocial support needs among displaced communities, including returnees, remain elevated and the local authorities and humanitarian community lack resources to adequately address these needs. The ongoing violence in parts of South Sudan has had major effects on the psychological well-being of the South Sudanese people. Refugees and other forcibly displaced South Sudanese have had to cope with losses, family disruptions and disconnection from their community support systems.

In **Egypt**, RRP partners are undertaking a mission to the border to assess the needs of those arriving from Sudan and explore the best ways to meet their needs and plan for future arrivals. Based on initial information, access to territory and asylum procedures can be challenging for people forced to flee Sudan, particularly for third-country nationals, those without valid travel documents, and those who are unable to obtain visas. This has resulted in family separation, breakdown of support systems, and a high number of unaccompanied and separated children and female-headed households. Some of the people fleeing Sudan have resorted to try and enter through irregular pathways, which exposes them to risks of exploitation. Trauma among the population has been observed, specialized mental and psychosocial support is needed especially for children and survivors of gender-based violence. Due to the collapse of the Sudan's banking system new arrivals report having no access to cash rendering them helpless at the border and unable to pay for transportation/basic needs, which adds to their vulnerability. While the initial response from hosting communities has been positive, many entry points are in remote and underserved communities and peaceful coexistence may quickly deteriorate if local actors and communities are not supported.

In the **Central African Republic**, emergency teams have been deployed. A rapid assessment among the new arrivals was conducted with a team of local actors to identify arrivals and emergency needs. The major needs at this stage are emergency shelter, food, health, WASH, core relief items and relocation, as moving people away from the border to more secure locations will mitigate some of the protection challenges.

In **Ethiopia**, the country is already hosting over 1 million refugees (including the recent refugee influx from the Laas Canood region of Somalia). Decreasing funding for humanitarian organizations

in the country overall has hampered the current emergency response, nevertheless RRP partners have deployed teams to the two main border crossings in Amhara and Benishangul Gumuz regions and have conducted an inter-agency assessment mission with the regional and local Ethiopian authorities. The priority needs identified include food, water, sanitation and hygiene promotion, health and nutrition, shelter, core relief items and the delivery of protection services. The provision of protection services to newly arrived refugees is key, including child protection, family reunification, protection risk mitigation, referral pathways and community engagement. Due to the vulnerable situation of the refugees (45% are women and girls), protection risks, including family separation, gender-based violence, exploitation and sexual abuse, are high with the urgent need for the establishment of mitigation and response mechanisms. Signs of psychological distress among refugees and asylum-seekers have been observed. Capacity building of regional administrations and local woredas to support and facilitate community-based protection activities and peaceful coexistence among displaced refugees and host communities is also a priority.

## Regional Priorities

UNHCR and RRP partners have emergency teams on the ground and are assisting the authorities with technical support, screening and registering new arrivals, carrying out and expanding regular protection monitoring and strengthening reception capacity, as well as ensuring that basic and urgent needs are met. In many of the refugee-hosting countries, reception centres are open and hotlines are available to orient new arrivals. UNHCR's global supply chains have been activated, core relief items are being distributed and airlifts to the most remote locations are underway.

As set out in the Global Compact on Refugees, this RRP plan is taking a "whole-of-society" approach and is designed in support of the hosting governments. It will build on the capacities and expertise of the refugees themselves and the communities acting as first responders, noting that in many locations the capacity to respond is already overstretched as refugees are arriving at areas where food insecurity is high and existing services are minimal or non-existent.

UNHCR and partners are engaged in advocacy with neighbouring country governments to seek assurances that they keep their borders open for those fleeing Sudan, seeking international protection or returning to their countries of origin.

RRP partners will:

- Support host countries to ensure access to territory and asylum for all individuals in need of international protection, in line with their situation, and in compliance with the principle of non-refoulement.
- Support host countries to provide timely and life-saving humanitarian assistance for all those fleeing Sudan, with a specific focus on the most vulnerable.
- Identify persons with specific needs and vulnerable persons and provide specialized services.

**860,000**
Total planning figure

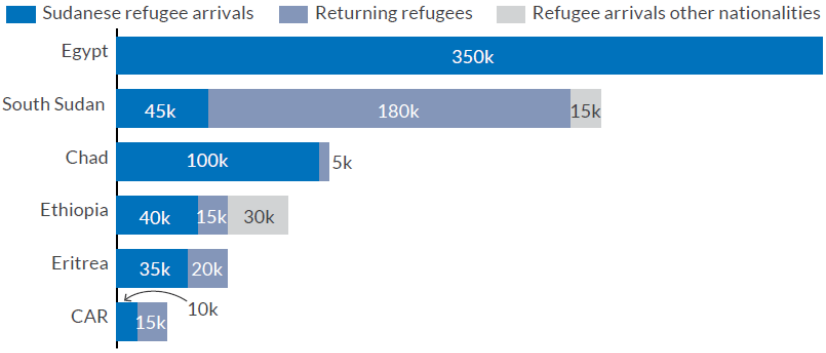
**580,000**
Total projected Sudanese refugee arrivals

**235,000**
Total projected returning refugees

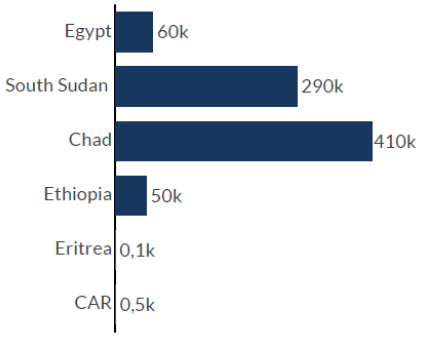
**45,000**
Total projected refugee arrivals other nationalities

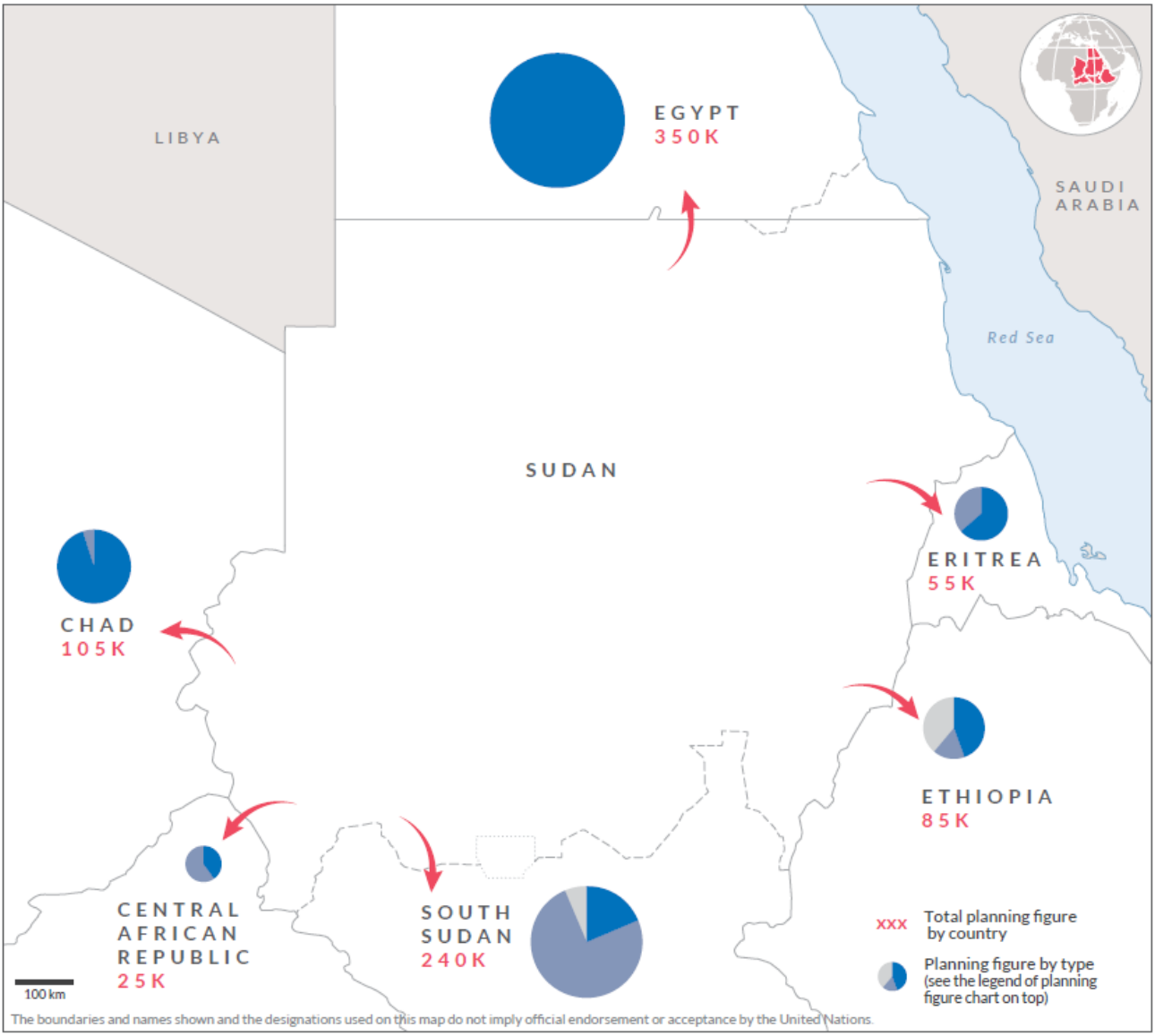
**810,600**
Total current Sudanese refugees

**Planning figures** | in thousands




**Current Sudanese refugees** | in thousands




Creation date: 03 May 2023 Sources: UNHCR Feedback: ipda@unhcr.org

# Country Emergency Response Strategies and Activities

## CHAD

In a two-pronged approach, UNHCR coordinates the inter-agency emergency response at the border and provides immediate relocation and assistance to refugees in camps. The emergency response at the border is led by UNHCR and the Government and includes providing protection (pre-registration, protection and border monitoring, advocacy and training to preserve the humanitarian and civilian character of asylum, identification and assistance to people with specific needs, including unaccompanied children, older persons and pregnant women), food, nutrition screening, treatment and prevention of malnutrition, water trucking and construction of boreholes and community latrines, mobile clinic and vaccination. Under the relocation and assistance approach, UNHCR will transfer refugees into existing camps and create up to five new camps to accommodate new arrivals. The current capacity is for 17,000 new arrivals in existing camps (8,000 in Gaga and 3,000 each in Goz Amir, Djabal and Mile) and relocation to existing camps is planned to start with the construction of 700 additional shelters in Gaga. RRP partners will provide refugee access to all essential services in the existing camps and UNHCR is also in discussion with the Government on new sites.

So far, 22,286 refugees have received protection services, including registration, and support to mitigate risks of gender-based violence and child protection. Over 6,410 refugees have received core relief items and 2,000 women received dignity kits. 10,000 refugees have received clean water distributed through water trucking. Nutrition partners screened 400 children below five years old for acute malnutrition, 95 malnourished children received treatment (26.6 % of all children screened). More than 7,500 refugees have received a 30-day food ration with nutrition supplements to prevent malnutrition. Mobile clinics provided health services to 7,000 refugees, including medical consultations, pre and antenatal care, and mental health services. Some 3,600 children have been vaccinated against measels. Health partners also assisted 20 women safely deliver their babies. For the gender-based violence response, refugees are receiving information on support available for GBV survivors, and all identified survivors have received psychosocial support.

## SOUTH SUDAN

RRP partners have set up a transit centre where new arrivals will receive essential protection services, including child protection and family reunification, use of telecommunication services to contact family and plan onward travel as well as receive emergency relief items. The humanitarian partners, including UNHCR and IOM teams, are focused on supporting the Government with the most vulnerable new arrivals at prioritized points of entry with life-saving support.

The strategy agreed with local and national authorities is to avoid the creation of camps and to prevent congestion at remote border crossings that may lead to camp-like situations in particularly inhospitable settings. RRP partners will assist the most vulnerable returnees with transportation away from the border. In locations where transportation from the border is limited, the most vulnerable will be accommodated in temporary transit centres where they will receive specialized assistance, non-food items and lodging while transportation is organized.

Pre-existing refugee camps that are likely to draw in new people, especially those lacking other support mechanisms, will need to be further expanded, with all basic services ramped up, including WASH, shelter, health, education and others. A settlement approach will be adopted for refugees arriving from the Darfur into Western and Northern Bahr el Ghazal.

## EGYPT

RRP partners will support the Government to address the humanitarian situation resulting from the current crisis in Sudan. Aid is being delivered by the UN and distributed by the Egyptian Red Crescent to those who arrive, including water, hygiene and sanitary kits, wheelchairs, food and masks and gloves.

UNHCR will engage with the Government border management authorities on differentiated asylum procedures; increased humanitarian presence to support the protection environment; strengthening reception activities; and profiling and obtaining needs information to enhance overall emergency response in Aswan. Meanwhile, at Cairo level there will be a surge capacity of registration and documentation activities to be able to respond to new arrivals from Sudan; enhancement of existing registration and documentation services for refugees and asylum-seekers, particularly children; the establishment of legal and physical protection services, including mental health and psychosocial support, to primarily focus on identification and referral; and capacity building and awareness raising on asylum proceeses in Egypt. In close coordination with the GoE, partners will provide legal assistance and protection counselling.

UNHCR will work in close coordination with partners on early identification and timely referrals of children-at-risk; provide emergency cash assistance for vulnerable children, including unaccompanied and separated children, as well as non-food items to families including basic clothing, sanitary pads, diapers, and sleeping pads and blankets based on needs. Specialized mental health services for referred cases in need will be provided in addition to identification of and targeted assistance to persons with disabilities, older persons and other vulnerable populations. Partners will support identification capacity and the establishment of GBV multi-sectorial referral pathways within the border areas, Aswan, Cairo, and Alexandria.

## CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

RRP partners will provide an emergency response in two phases. First the objective will be to meet the most urgent needs at entry points. This will include: protection, including, pre-registration, protection and border monitoring, advocacy and training to preserve the humanitarian and civilian character of asylum, identification of and assistance to people with specific needs, including unaccompanied children, older persons and pregnant women; hot meals and food distribution; emergency and community shelters; mobile clinics, medical consultations, psychosocial support, nutrition screening, treatment and prevention of malnutrition; emergency education services, including child-friendly spaces, school supply support, advocacy for school registration and exams; provision of drinking water, latrines, hygiene and sanitation; and distribution of core relief items. The second phase will consist of relocation of refugees (following the out-of-camp approach) and implementation of protection and assistance activities. Local authorities have indicated that

refugees need to be immediately relocated to Birao to mitigate any protection risks given the proximity of the arrival site to the border.

**ETHIOPIA**

RRP partners will assist the Government with the construction of transit centres at the border points to receive and assist new arrivals; relocate vulnerable refugees (who are not able to sustain themselves) into existing refugee settlements / camps; and construct new refugee settlements where required.

Upon arrival at the border, refugees are screened by RRS to prevent detention and facilitate access to services and assistance. During registration, refugee intentions (eg. those wishing to stay with family in Addis Ababa, resettlement cases at advanced stage, etc) will be documented. High energy biscuits, hot meals, basic and medical assistance will be offered. WASH services, including water trucking for the first three months, construction of latrines and bathing facilities, will be provided. Protection teams will assist in screening, identification, registration and referral of persons with specific needs, such as unaccompanied and separated children, older persons, people with medical needs, pregnant mothers, persons with disabilities, and others. Protection monitoring and assessment, including border monitoring, has been initiated to better respond to the situation of refugees and asylum-seekers, and this will continue. It is estimated that refugees may stay at the transit centres for 1-2 months while further solutions are being sought.

UNHCR will diligently work with RRS to ensure that refugees with family ties in urban areas, including Addis Ababa, or refugees that are able to support themselves, are allowed to stay in urban areas. Refugees without a means of self-sustenance will be relocated to existing refugee settlements or refugee camps. However, noting that the majority of existing settlements / camps have reached full capacity, new refugee sites are already being identified in collaboration with local authorities for development of new refugee settlements.

## Regional Cross-Cutting Response Priorities

The Regional Refugee Response Plan is guided by the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) to promote solutions and inclusion from the outset of the refugee emergency. All interventions will be designed, implemented, and monitored through rights-based, community-based and Age Gender Diversity (AGD) approaches. Protection interventions include identifying the most vulnerable refugees, in particular survivors of violence, unaccompanied and separated children, older persons, single women and female-headed households. Those in need will be offered assistance and referrals to key services such as legal aid, family reunification and alternative care arrangements. Inclusive and accessible mechanisms to ensure accountability to affected people will be set up, including two-way communication channels and feedback and response mechanisms. A community-based protection approach will be implemented in all interventions and peaceful coexistence among refugees and host communities will be promoted. Women and girls in displacement situations may be at higher risk of gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse or intimate partner violence. Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) will be prioritized, including by strengthening inter-agency networks and PSEA mechanisms and systems in receiving countries.

# Partnership and Coordination

In line with the Global Compact on Refugees, UNHCR is facilitating the setting up of coordination mechanisms in each country with the aim to support the host government, ensure a multistakeholder approach and lay the groundwork for solutions from the start. The implementation of the Sudan Regional Refugee Response Plan will be done in line with the Refugee Coordination Model (RCM) in close collaboration with inter-agency partners and other stakeholders. Coordination mechanisms in some countries will need to be strengthened with the set-up of specific inter-agency refugee coordination fora to help steer the immediate response and ensure information sharing with all partners. This will enable RRP partners to work efficiently together to maximize the response, avoid duplications and better link up to existing longer term coordination mechanisms to encourage development actors to be part of the response as soon as possible. It will also aim at guiding joint advocacy initiatives and resource mobilization efforts in support of the country-level response plans.

In **Chad**, UNHCR works closely with the Ministry of Territorial Administration, Public Security, Immigration and Local Governance and the Commission for National Reception and Reintegration of Refugees (CNARR) to support and coordinate the government's response to refugees. At the national level, this coordination and support is led by the UNHCR Representative in conjunction with the RC/HC and the Ministry of Territorial Administration. The RC/HC coordinates with the Ministry of Planning, senior officials, partners, and donors.

At the provincial level, CNARR is the interface between humanitarian partners, local authorities, and decentralized State services. UNHCR and CNARR representations in Abéché are jointly coordinating and monitoring the response.

In **South Sudan**, the RRP is implemented under the coordination and leadership of the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) of the Government of the Republic of South Sudan, which will lead a whole-of-government response. UNHCR and IOM will co-lead the overall response at the border and in its initial phase in close coordination with OCHA, cluster leads, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), UN agencies, and other humanitarian actors to ensure harmonization of coordination structures.

In accordance with the Refugee Coordination Model, UNHCR maintains its leadership responsibility in refugee response in cooperation with the Commission for Refugee Affairs (CRA) as the government refugee entity responsible for the overall management and coordination of refugee and asylum matters and leading in preparedness and regulating of refugee reception mechanisms with the support of UNHCR.

IOM maintains its leadership responsibility for migrants and third country nationals in close cooperation with immigration authorities and the RRC who is specifically responsible to respond to returnees.

In **Egypt**, the coordination structure for the country-level RRP is underpinned by the multi-stakeholder and partnership approaches outlined in the Refugee Coordination Model and the Global Compact on Refugees. Under the leadership of the Inter-Agency Working Group, the Inter-Sector Working Group will lead the multisectoral response at the technical level. Since 2015, Egypt has also been part of the 3RP, the Regional Refugee Response Plan to respond to the Syria crisis, which provides an established and functional platform and allows for enhanced cooperation mechanisms among humanitarian and development partners. Building on to the existing coordination structure, which is comprised of the Protection, Education, Health and Food Security sectors, Livelihood and Economic Inclusion will be a standalone sector while Basic Needs will incorporate NFIs. The Food Security sector will have nutrition as a sub-sector. Meanwhile, WASH and Logistics and Telecoms sectors have been newly created.

In **CAR**, UNHCR and the National Commission for Refugees are leading the multi-sectoral Refugee Protection Working Group to coordinate planning and interventions in Bangui. The coordination of refugee protection will be maintained by UNHCR and CNR at the national (Bangui) and local (Birao) level, while the overall coordination will be through sectors based on the mixed IDP and refugee situation model as defined in the "UNHCR-OCHA Joint Note".

In **Ethiopia**, the response is led by the Government of Ethiopia under the leadership of the Refugees and Returnees Service (RRS) and supported by RRP partners, in adherence to the Refugee Coordination Model (RCM) and the Global Compact for Refugees (GCR). The response is co-led by RRS and UNHCR at national and regional level, with the contribution of UN Agencies, international and national NGOs, donors, Regional Bureaus, local authorities and other partners. An Inter-Agency Task Force, co-chaired by UNHCR and RRS, has been set up in the four regions expected to receive refugee / returnee arrivals. In the existing refugee camps and sites similar inter-agency task forces have been established with sectoral working groups on protection, WASH, health, shelter, and education. In addition, UNHCR and RRS have initiated an ad-hoc meeting with the Government, other UN Agencies and partners to critically assess the situation and respond accordingly.

# Financial Requirements

RRP partners are appealing for an estimated $445 million USD for an initial period from May to October 2023. The RRP will be revised as the situation evolves.

**Regional budget summary per country (in US dollars)**

| CAR | Chad | Egypt | Ethiopia | South Sudan | Total Budget |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| $34.5M | $129.8M | $107.6M | $76.9M | $96.1M | $445M |