

**Khartoum Southern Sudanese Internally Displaced People (IDPs) Return Intention Assessment
& Focus Group Discussions in Wad el-Bashir and Omdurman es-Salaam, Khartoum**

30th September 2010



1. INTRODUCTION

In August 2010 FAR Sudan conducted a return intention survey in Khartoum State, specifically among South Sudanese IDPs living in Jebel Aulia, Mayo, Wad el-Beshir and Omdurman el-Salaam. This was followed up by focus group discussions in September 2010.

Background

The most recent survey estimates the population of the four IDP camps to be at 350,000 people, most of whom have been displaced by conflict in southern Sudan, Darfur, the Nuba Mountains, North Kordofan and Eastern Sudan, though the population also includes some economic and foreign migrants. The demography of the displaced has continuously been changing due to the return of South Sudanese after the conclusion of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005 which also coincided with an increasing number of displaced people from Darfur to the IDP camps,

The southern Sudan referendum on unity or secession will be held on January 9th 2011 and it is closely tied to the return of Southerners back to southern Sudan both before and after the referendum. Since 2006, FAR has provided medical care and non-food items to over 48,000 returnees whilst waiting for and whilst travelling on the barges which depart from the wharf at Kosti, White Nile. On average 1,800-2,000 people have passed through the wharf each month (since July 2010) but this number is expected to increase to more than 4,000 during November and December 2010 as the referendum draws nearer.

The objective of the survey is to inform FAR and stakeholders i.e. donors, UN, Sudanese government about the return intentions of IDPs. The survey also assesses the needs of the most vulnerable such as women and children. The survey was planned by FAR in cooperation with the Commission of Voluntary and Humanitarian Works (CVHW) and contains direct questions on whether IDPs will return to the South, whether their return depends on denial of citizenship in the North.

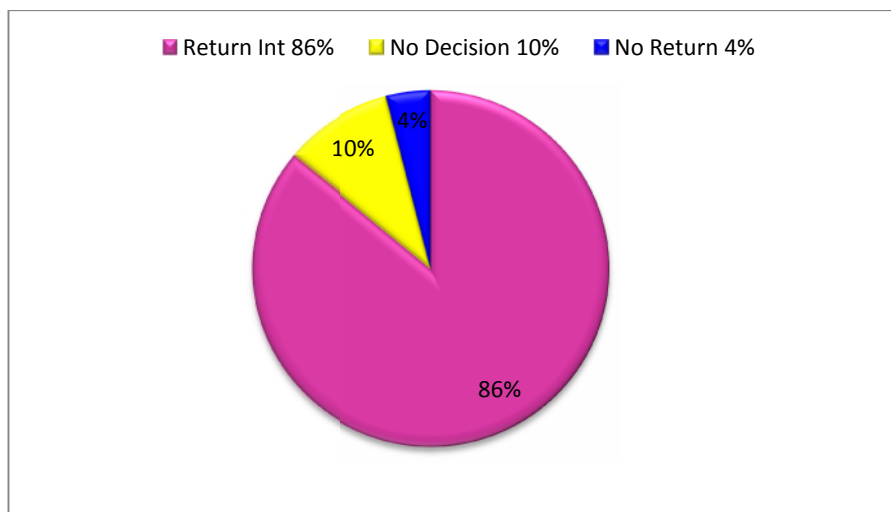
Currently, an estimated 22,400 South Sudanese households (165,760 people) live in the four IDP camps (Jebel Aulia 4,800, Omdurman El Salaam 9,600, Wad El Beshir 3000 and Mayo farms 5,000). This represents about 40% of the general total population of the IDPs (South Sudanese, Nuba mountains, Eastern Sudan, Darfur, etc). The FAR team surveyed a total of 599 households, (150 per each camp) which represents 2.6% of the estimated South Sudanese IDPs households.

2. FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY

The survey methodology involved the collection of quantitative data as well as qualitative data from focus group discussions. The focus group discussions involved local community leaders, youth women representatives, as well as those representing their own household.

Return Intentions

599 IDP heads of households were asked whether they and their families intend to return to South Sudan. **86%** stated they intend to return to south Sudan, **4 %** stated they will not and the **10%** stated they are currently undecided. At the focus group discussion with community representatives of Wad El Beshir and El Salaam camp, one of the remarks of the participants was that, answers of the household return intention survey would be more valid than that of the group, because most of the participants represent different interest groups and therefore would not state their opinion openly. The participants also, expressed fears that the return issue is being politicized. The main obstacle to return is the lack of funds to pay for the plane or barge tickets.

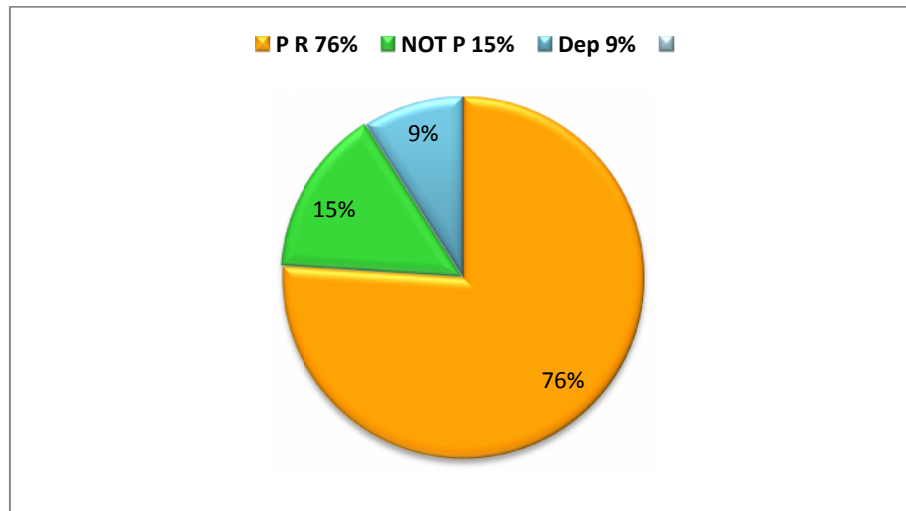


Return Intentions- Household separation and Fragmentation

The results of the survey indicate that 86%, around 515 IDPs in the four camps intend to return to southern Sudan. 80 % of respondents said that family members who remain in Khartoum will join them later. The reasons that family members may stay in Khartoum for some time after others have left is to ensure safety of their properties and assets such as land, social ties such as marriage, educational opportunities for children and young adults as well as ties to employment and income. Other reasons to keep family members in Khartoum are to establish a reasonable standard of living and prospects before sending for the rest of the household. These reasons were supplemented by the focus group who said that due to the informal nature of women’s work many women were unable to save enough money to meet the cost of returning to southern Sudan, with prospects worsened by the fact that many of their husbands are unemployed. In cases of return, women are most likely to remain behind until a home has been established in the south. In the educational sector, many southern students were not admitted onto university courses for the 2010-2011 year and they cited this as a pull factor. Most IDPs are unconcerned about leaving their current employment as most of this work is casual, without rights or access to social insurance or after service benefits.

Duration of Return

The respondents who indicated they will return were asked whether this was a permanent return. 76% stated they will return permanently, 15% stated not permanently, and 9% said they were undecided. The last two stated that the permanence of their return depended on factors, such as stability, jobs, education opportunities for their children, properties (land). Some focus group members remarked that they ideally would like to maintain two homes- one in the north and one in the south until after the referendum, when they would then decide. Some stated that permanent return is the intention of the IDPs who do not have any properties. The vulnerable groups such as women heads of households represents about 38% of the heads of households in OeS, WeB and most of them are widows. Their means of livelihood is from informal employment such as domestic labour, brewing and selling alcohol. Those who have tried alternative businesses such as selling tea, Tashali (fried seeds) have been considered informal if they cannot pay fees/taxes and are therefore closed down by the council authorities. So for many women, they feel their opportunities for business and income lie in the south. In Mayo, the respondents felt that a permanent return also depended on a peaceful referendum and cooperation between the two governments. They said that “pressure” is one of the factors encouraging return. Example, if an IDP want to obtain a nationality certificate, he/she is often asked to bring 3 people to witness and the latter should be members of his/her kinsmen and this is not often possible.

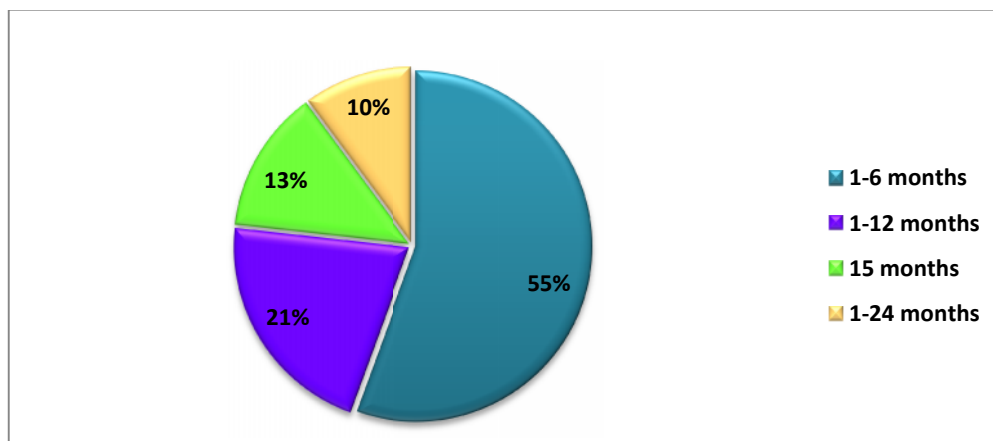


Return Timeline

When asked if they have plans to return and when will they return to South Sudan: 55% stated they will return in the next six months, 21% stated they will return within the next 12 months; 13% in one year and 10% within the next 2 years. Interestingly the people of Equatoria (CES, WES and EES) are among highest number of IDPs that have not returned. Some returnees said they were worried of travelling back by boat or road from fear of the insecurity and presence of the LRA in some areas of the south.

Other factors affecting return

The question of rights and provisioning clearly concerns many of the IDPs. Women from southern Sudan who have married northerners are concerned about what they and their children's status will be as well as the possibility that their children will not be able to take the Sudan School Certificate. Parents are concerned their children will not be able to sit the Sudan School Certificate in 2011. That being said, those who have been in Khartoum for over twenty years but who have not received the deeds to their land are not motivated to stay. Another concern is that the IDPs who are over 18 and currently in juvenile detention centres (example, in Soba, Jebel Aulia, FAW, and Kobar) may not have the opportunity to participate in the referendum. A lack of information or understanding on the voting process, and registration means that some IDPs are confused especially as many have also registered with their chiefs for census and protection purposes.



Provisioning of services

When asked if granted services in the north would affect their decision to return, 79% of the IDPs stated they will return to southern Sudan regardless and 21% indicated they will remain in the North. Many participants did not understand the link between the provisioning of services and the referendum. The following questions were raised during the FGD. Why services today and not earlier, and why not during the war? They are suspicious of such proposals and some said, it is a bribe. Other remarks also were that, they were mobilized during the April elections, that services would be provided including distribution of plots but nothing happened. In general, the IDPs are concerned that, there are no permanent solutions to their problems in the North. They are eager to know about their status when living in north after the referendum: The general reasons of those who stated they will remain in the north include:

- Insecurity in the South
- Conflict [Tribalism]
- No difference between the north and the South
- Education of children
- Job opportunities
- Properties such as land
- Lack of services, clean water
- Situation not clear

When asked if they would return to the north if they were not granted /do not have access to services in the South, 21% responded they would return to the North and 69% responded they would not return. Respondents justified their answers with reasons such as being in the “homeland”, the desire to be self-reliant and also the possibility of living a more stable, peaceful life. During the group discussions in OeS and WeS, the feeling is that unless people are present in the South, services will not be provided. Many group participants said that the only service they wanted from the government of south Sudan is transport to return to the south. Other concerns are that the government law may not allow them to sell their plots, and are looking to human/international actors to advocate on their behalf.

When asked if the referendum resulted into separation/independence will they return? 66% responded they will return and 23% stated they will not. Most of focus group discussion participants of WeB, OeS and Mayo stated they will return. The focus group have different reasons of differing opinions due to the following justification: There are 3 categories of South Sudanese in Khartoum. Those who migrated for economic reasons, those who sought employment and the IDPs. Some said they have not seen any changes in their lives and their choice is to return, especially the IDPs.. Some focus group members also aired their fears for their own safety and survival. One member even remarked that, those who opt to stay in the north should start digging their own graves. This member was concerned by recent statements from ministries on the denial of health care and benefits.

#	DESTINATION ACCORDING TO STATES						
	STATES	JEBEL	MAYO	OeS	WeB	TOTAL	%
1	WES	21	14	6	13	54	36
2	CES	23	29	12	36	100	67

3	WBG	13	11	8	5	37	25
4	EES	34	32	9	33	108	72
5	LAKES	1	9	1	2	13	9
6	JONGOLIE	9	2	2	5	18	12
7	UPPER NILE	17	15	46	6	84	56
8	UNITY STATE	3	8	7	3	21	14
9	NBG	12	15	42	34	103	69
10	Warrap	9	7	6	1	23	15
11	Abyei	5		7		12	8
12	Other	26				26	18
		173	142	146	138	599	

Limitations

Random selection of interviewees in some areas which were not planned example, Abuja in Jebel Aulia. There is the possibility that errors were made during the data inputting from the surveys into the computer.

Some interviewees and community members were suspicious of the motives of the survey. This was not widespread but one should take into account the general anxiety that many may have about the use of their answers being passed onto third parties, especially as the referendum has become such a politicised view.(FGD?)

IDPs are concern about any return programme, especially those who have registered their intention during the 2006-2007 return intention and registration exercise that had involved IOM, UN and the governments of Sudan

