

## Two millions IDPs and refugees return to Southern Sudan - UN

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By Isaac Vuni

March 5, 2008 (JUBA) — By the end of year 2007, since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), total of two million individuals southern Sudanese have returned, said the UNMIS Regional Coordinator for Southern Sudan and Deputy Resident Coordinator for Sudan.



*David Gressly*

David Gressly said that a total of 157, 217 returnees came through organized repatriation while 52,787 were IDPs, 76,955 refugees and 27,475 were organized to returns by other organizations than UN.

Briefing nationwide Journalists connected through the UN sponsored Miraya FM radio station in Juba press hall, Gressly said that a total of 68,000 Internally Displace Persons (IDPs) have returned from Khartoum to Southern Sudan, 40, 000 including 4,000 from transitional areas, 5,000 from Western Bhar el Ghazal state to Warrap state, 15,000 from Eastern Equatoria state to Jonglei, and 8,000 from south Darfur to Northern Bhar el Ghazal meanwhile 80,000 refugees returned from Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia to several states of Southern Sudan.

As from January 2008 to the present day, UN and International Organization for Migration (IOM) have assisted 5,060 IDPs to return to their respective home villages in the ten states of southern Sudan and also assisted the stranded and vulnerable 700 Ambororo to reach Unity state; that the UNHCH also assisted 2,500 refugees to return to Southern Sudan.

He says the returnees would now be able to participate in the forthcoming national population and housing census including 2009 election. The estimated total number of IDPS and refugees is about 4.4

million.

That NUMIS targeted to repatriate a total of 438,000 returnees this year out of which 250,000 would come from spontaneous returns. Another 188,000 would be from the organized returnees, out of which 108,000 would come from the IDPs and 80 from refugee's camps. Hence a total of 310,365 individuals are expected to returns to the ten state of southern Sudan in readiness for national population and housing census exercises scheduled from 14th to 30th April 2008.

David Gressly attributed the success of repatriating both the IDPs and the refugees to tripartite agreements signed with five countries; Central African Republic (CAR), adding that repatriation from CAR and DRC has already been completed.

When asked of what plan UN have for IDPs now occupying Magwi and Nimule corridor and making it difficult for indigenous people to return from Ugandan refugees camps, he say UN together with southern Sudan government (GoSS) will soon repatriate the IDPs who are mainly from Bor of Jonglei states because security situation in Jonglei has improved and its high time for them to go and be counted in their own original villages.

While responding on the fear that Nimule areas has been heavily mined because it was the major frontline, he say Eastern Equatoria state has been cleared of land mines since last year by southern Sudan landmine commission.

Gressly further said the mapping of census has been completed and material are being transported to the ten stated of southern Sudan in readiness for census night of 14th April 2008.

Meanwhile regarding roads situation, he said it will not hinder or obstruct census exercise.

Gressly also serves as Deputy Resident Coordinator for Southern Sudan, coordinating operations of all UN aid agencies in the region.

On peace talks in Juba between the LRA and the Ugandan Government, Gressly said he expected a final agreement by the end of the month. "My understanding from what the parties have conveyed is that there are no outstanding substantive issues to work out, only administrative ones."

Gressly said there had been bad and good-days during the negotiations but that of recent the parties are heading to ending the twenty years of conflict after they have signed all the fives vital points of agreements. What remains is only a ceremonial endorsement of the peace deal before heads of states and governments as witnesses.

UNMIS press briefing is part of continued effort by the United Nations to provide regularly updates to the press about the work of the UN in southern Sudan to support the implementation of the CPA.

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