

S. Sudan: IOM completes assessments in high return areas

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September 17, 2012 (JUBA) - The International Organization for Migration (IOM) says it has completed data collection on basic services in 30 counties, which have seen high number of returnees to newly-independent South Sudan.

The data, according to the organization, had been accumulated since February this year, encompassing over 800 bomas [villages] in at least 30 of the 78 administrative areas in the country.

“This is the most extensive survey to date in South Sudan and will provide tools to analyze gaps in services and identify key areas for development across the country,” IOM said in a statement, adding that its findings will be released early next year.

The data, IOM says, will reportedly be analyzed in relation to returnees' access to livelihood opportunities, protection services, water and sanitation, education, and health in those counties.

“The results of this large-scale assessment will help lay the ground for a more coherent and efficient approach to returnee reintegration, which remains a critical gap in South Sudan,” further notes the statement extended to *Sudan Tribune*.

Two months after it marked its first independence anniversary, South Sudan is still grappling with challenges of how to absorb thousands of its people, who recently returned from Sudan where they lived as refugees for years.

The IOM, in partnership with the Government of South Sudan, also initiated system of tracking returnees, through tracking hubs, which are established at entry points and enumerators verifying returns at a village level.

Over 123,000 new returns, according to the organization, have been recorded since January 2012, with South Sudan's Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Unity (286,146), and Central Equatoria states registering the highest numbers of returns respectively.

However, while nearly 30 capacity building workshops on data collection for at least 228 staffs from South Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission were conducted during the first phase of the project, IOM has reportedly trained 400 staff involved in the data collection.

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