

Humanitarian Information Needs Community Voices Bulletin

November - 2023 / Issue #2

Renk South Sudan



PHOTO: World Food Program (WFP) staff conduct full Biometric Registration of returnees and refugees for cash assistance targeting new arrivals at the Renk Transit Center, Upper Nile State - South Sudan. | © WFP

Supported by the World Food Program (WFP), Internews is working with the Community Engagement Network (CEN) to respond to community information gaps, concerns and needs at the Renk Transit centre. We provide a two-way information platform that connects community members with verified and actionable information from humanitarian responders to connect the community with services, elevate community voices, and inform decision-making. This project serves thousands of people displaced by the conflict in Sudan in Renk County, Upper Nile State in South Sudan.

FEEDBACK COLLECTION

The Internews humanitarian information service involves a continual process of listening and two-way communication with the community and humanitarian responders.

Community Correspondents collect feedback, questions, and concerns from community members each day through one- to-one and group discussions. We ensure a diverse range of voices is heard and provide an alternative for community members who may not feel comfortable, or may not know how, to approach humanitarian actors with their feedback directly.

FEEDBACK HIGHLIGHTS

A total of 167 pieces of feedback were collected from the Renk Transit Center, Zero Center, and Abu Khudara in Renk between the beginning and the middle of November 2023. WASH, health, and protection-related issues make up more than half of the concerns, complaints, and recommendations highlighted by returnees and refugees. WASH had the most at 21.55%, Protection and Child Protection at 15.56% with Health closely following at 13.77%. The feedback serves as a guide, highlighting the priorities and concerns expressed by the affected community, and should be used to shape a targeted and responsive humanitarian approach.

If you want to contribute to this bulletin or discuss our data please contact:

Senior Humanitarian Program Manager (lkrivchenia@internews.org), Humanitarian Media Advisor, Tusiime W. Romeo (Akiiki) (atusiime@internews.org), Program Manager, Philip James Lukudu (Philip.James@cen-ss.org), Renk, Upper Nile, South Sudan.

FOOD DISTRIBUTION, NUTRITION, AND CASH ASSISTANCE

There's gratitude expressed toward the provision of nutritious food to children, but there are multiple requests for changes in the way aid is delivered. With all the persistent challenges the refugees and returnees are facing, the steady dedication to aid delivery revolves around key areas like food distribution, nutrition, cash assistance, and several other areas of humanitarian endeavor. Through feedback collection from diverse sources within the affected population, a fairly informative overview of the present circumstances emerges. This complex understanding empowers humanitarian agencies to craft precise and effective strategies tailored to meet the urgent needs of the crisis-hit people.

FOOD DISTRIBUTION

From the feedback collected, 87% of respondents reported severe challenges in accessing adequate food supplies. Families are grappling with a single meal per day, resulting in a concerning impact on overall health. Children in Protection of Civilians (PoC) areas are dropping out of school due to the absence of school feeding services. Some returnees from Sudan, constituting 18% of respondents, highlight a critical gap in monthly food rations. The introduction of CSB++ Plump nutrition food for children is advocated, stressing the importance of addressing specific nutritional needs.

CASH ASSISTANCE

Cash assistance, affecting 15% of respondents, emerges as a pressing concern. Those who receive it in time say they use it creatively to supplement their daily needs and household requirements. Delays in support for grinding mills impact livelihoods, prompting a plea for immediate disbursement alongside general food distribution. Suggestions to replace Sorghum with cash-friendly alternatives, like corn, underscore the need for adaptive aid strategies.

NUTRITION

Nutritional deficiencies, particularly among children and pregnant mothers, are flagged by 36% of those who provided feedback. Calls for a shift from standard cooking oil to nut oil and the provision of specific nutrition foods get attention. A request was also made to ensure pregnant women receive dedicated nutritional support.

THE URGENT NEED FOR PROTECTION

Feedback highlighting concerns, complaints, and fears about safety and security among the refugees and returnees focuses on a wide-ranging number of issues. There were some requests from caretakers and people with disabilities seeking specific support, including several requests for mobility aids. It was also raised that people with disabilities have greater challenges in accessing humanitarian services, especially if they have to move to access them. There are concerns about safety due to snakes, requests for lighting of dark areas to prevent theft, and gender-based violence at pit latrines. There are complaints of alcohol and drug abuse and pleas to address the issue. Most of these concerns were raised by women, girls, and people with disabilities.

“
Returnees appreciate the roles
humanitarians are playing in
providing services to people
affected by malnutrition.
”

Security and lighting featured most with 16.7% of the feedback highlighting the need for illumination of dark spots to prevent abuse, including gender-based violence. A specific suggestion was also made more than once that community disabilities patrol or watch groups could help prevent violence and theft. Mistreatment by armed actors was also raised as a concern and a request was made for the humanitarian community to support in advising them to treat civilians well.



PHOTO: A CEN community correspondent talking to a new arrival returnee at Zero Center in Renk, Upper Nile State - South Sudan. | © CEN

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HEALTH

Refugees and returnees expressed concerns about the complex situation of health-related challenges they face. Prioritizing improvements in malaria treatment, financial assistance, vaccination campaigns, mental health services, and overall healthcare infrastructure were some of the critical issues raised.

Many health-related concerns have been highlighted including insufficient medical supplies to treat malaria. The need for vaccination of children, and psychological challenges require urgent attention. Appreciation for the timely treatment of the crisis-hit population was recorded but some complained about side effects from medicines. Some returnees made a plea for a more robust health infrastructure and appreciated some health-implementing organizations. The establishment of a clinic in Joda showcases the pivotal role of humanitarian efforts. The feedback calls for humanitarian action to address the needs of those on the path to recovery and resilience.



PHOTO: World Food Program (WFP) staff registering refugees and returnees for the High Energy Biscuits (HEB) at the Renk Port for the onward movement to Malakal, Upper Nile State - South Sudan. | © WFP



COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

The Community Correspondents record and share the community concerns with the relevant humanitarian agencies for fact-checked responses in a transparent and timely manner. We then close the feedback loop by packaging the questions and answers into the Community Voice programs, which are broadcast in local languages through speakers in places where the community gathers.

FOOD DISTRIBUTION

One of the returnees is asking WFP to coordinate with representatives of women and youth before start of food distributions as they play role in delivery and sharing of information on food support.

Returnees and refugees say that the services provided mostly benefit host communities and are asking WFP to provide food assistance.

Renk Transit Center



WFP Response

Introduction of full biometric registration has helped minimize inclusion errors.

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CASH ASSISTANCE

One returnee said the some host community members are taking their share of cash assistance and disappear from the Transit Center. He is asking WFP to pay special attention to the refugees and returnees from Sudan and provide services on time.
Male, Renk Transit Center



WFP Response

That is been screened by Token team as WFP does conflict sensitivity programming.

NUTRITION

Returnees and refugees are asking for the resumption of the provision of meals like before instead of distributing cash.

Renk Transit Center



WFP Response

The decision to go back is not possible for now due to several factors. The cash assistances will continue.

INFORMATION NEEDS

Refugees and returnees are complaining of lack information to refugees on services and assistance delivery. They are asking WFP to provide them with information about distribution days.

Returnees say they have no information about humanitarian assistance in the camp. They are asking WFP to deliver and provide information on all the services they offer.

A refugee is complaining of lack of access to information on services and is asking IOM to provide details of all the services available in Joda and at the transit center.

Refugees and returnees say they do not have sufficient information about the humanitarian services. There are no channels to access reliable information sources. They say humanitarian services are often carried out in an ambiguous manner.

Male and Female - Renk Transit Center



WFP Response

Information sharing processes will be strengthened through CEN's Community Voices program and WFP at different service points.



PHOTO: CEN airing humanitarian messages via the Community Voices program at the Joda Reception Center, Upper Nile State - South Sudan. | © CEN

“
We lack of assistance from the community leaders in the provision of information on services. We request humanitarians to train them in their roles and responsibilities.
”

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SHELTER

Refugees say there is severe cold due to the winter and are asking for blankets and tents.

Refugees and returnees are complaining that blankets and plastic sheet are distributed to only the disabled and the elderly. They say distribution should be done to all people regardless of their specific condition because they are all suffering from the bitter effects of war and conflict.

One refugee is asking to be transported by plane to the camp in Maban County since the road is impassable. **"We do not have shelter and we are suffering under the sun,"** she said.

HEALTH

Refugees and returnees have challenges related to psychological and mental illnesses due to experiences and exposure to war. They requested the establishment of a ward for psychosocial treatment.

Male and Female - Renk Transit Center

A patient among the returnees complained after being referred to Renk Civil Hospital for further medical check-up and was asked to pay for medication. She is asking aid agencies to continue offering free medical services.

Female - Renk Transit Center

JRS was appreciated for providing treatment to patients. However, the refugees requested JRS to provide emergency health services at the Transit Center.

Male and Female - Renk Transit Center

PROTECTION

Returnees say during the distribution of humanitarian assistance, youth must be present at the distribution sites to maintain order and organize people. They are asking for youth to control crowds.

Renk Transit Center

Refugees and returnees say there is overcrowding during a biometric registration. They are asking WFP to increase the number of computers and staff during registration and decongest the registration center. WFP is requested to prioritize the elderly and persons with disabilities.

Abu Khudara Center

A refugee is complaining of bad relations between some refugees and returnees. **"There is no friendship and understanding between them"**, he said. He asked for awareness campaigns on peaceful co-existence by communities.

Male, Renk Transit Center

WASH

Refugees in the Reception Center say they have only one water container they fill in the morning, yet they use a lot of water for household chores. They requested for water containers so that they can store enough water for use during the day.

Females, Transit Center - Renk

Refugees and returnees said there's overcrowding at the water collection point, and spend lengthy periods lining to get water. They requested for more water storage centers to reduce overcrowding and extended waiting.

Females, Transit Center - Renk

Refugees and returnees are complaining of the cut-off time for drinking water and are asking for a 24 hour supply of water. They also say they do not have jerrycans for water storage.

Male and Females - Renk Transit Center

Returnees presented a letter of appreciation for providing them with drinking water and urged them to continue with the support gesture.

Male and Females - Renk Transit Center

RETURNEES

Returnees requested transportation to their last destination because they'd been waiting for long in the center whose conditions were bad.

Returnees complained that food items were not enough. They said they needed an increment to last for a month.

One returnee complained about the lack of humanitarian services and requested for transport to places of origin.

"The International Migration Organization facilitated our rapid movement during arrival in Joda," the refugees and returnees appreciated IOM's work.

A returnee at Joda center appreciates the role of WFP and Goal in providing appropriate services in a timely manner. The provision of biscuits, and care for pregnant women, lactating mothers, and children is appreciated. She wishes these services continue to be provided the same way.

One of the refugees says since his arrival, he does not know where to go for services. The support I received is insufficient. I need directions to where the services are provided.

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WFP Response

Returnees get same first level of information during arrivals at the Transit Center. This can be reinforced during token distribution using recorded messages through CEN's Community Voice programs. The cash assistance is a one time off service.



WFP Response

UNHCR has been informed to provide returnees and refugees with information about WFP's cash assistance which is one-time off for now service.



WFP Response

First level of information is provided in the trucks, buses and vehicles that transport returnees and refugees. Before disembarking, they are informed of where to go for cash assistance which is now a one-time off service.

CHILD PROTECTION

A refugee said many children roam around unaccompanied. Community leaders are asking humanitarians to take keen interest in these children and find a way of supporting them.

A returnee observed that there are orphans and unaccompanied children in the center with no one taking care of them. She requested humanitarians to identify them and protect the vulnerable children from abuse and exploitation.

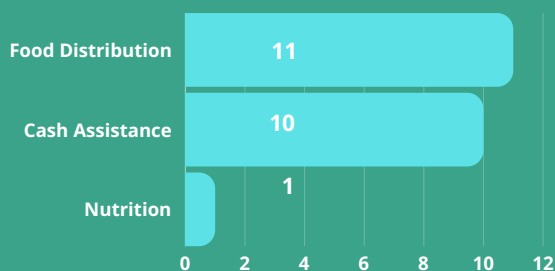


PHOTO: Refugees and returnees gathering to get humanitarian assistance at the Transit Center in Renk, Upper Nile State - South Sudan. | © WFP

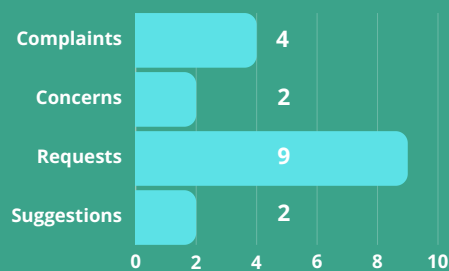
KEY FIGURES

FEEDBACK ON WFP HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

Number of people talked to between Nov 1-15 2023



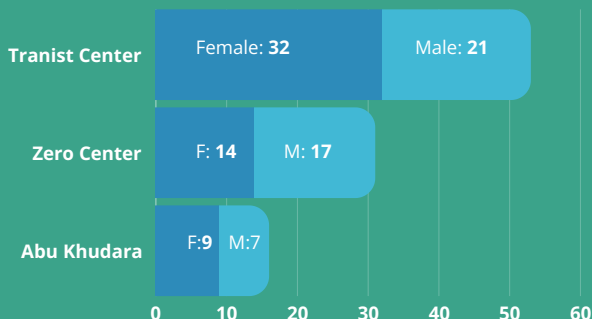
Type of feedback on WFP services collected between Nov 1-15 2023



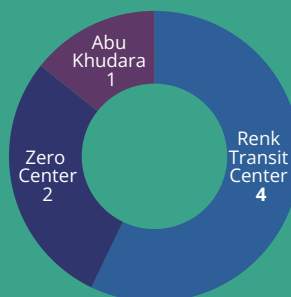
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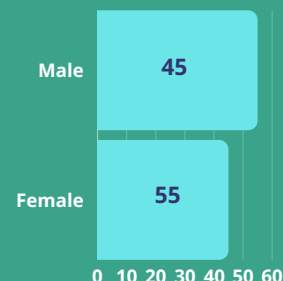
Number of locations where CEN collected feedback Nov 1-15 2023



Number of meetings per location Nov 1-15 2023



Number of people by Gender

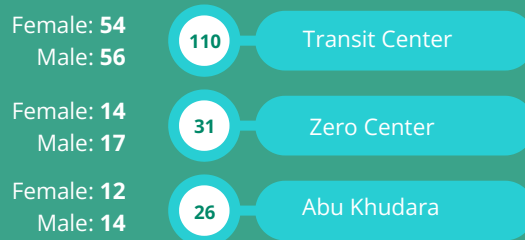


FEEDBACK ON GENERAL HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

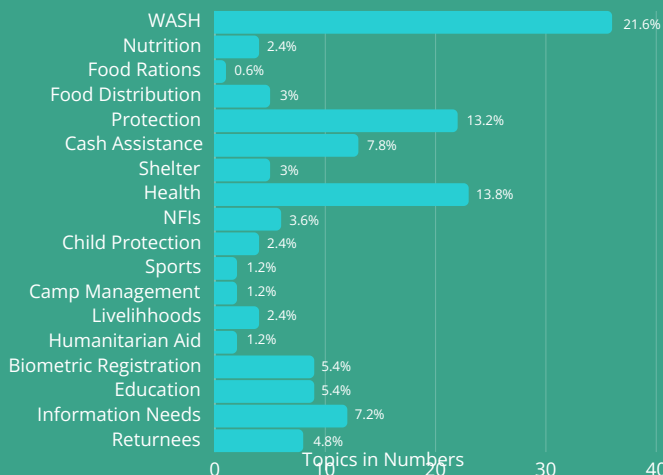
November 1st - 15th 2023



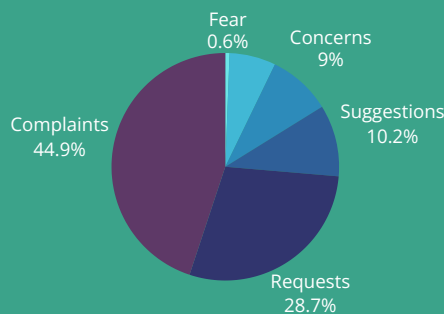
Feedback by Location



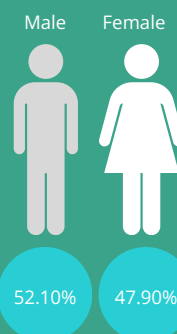
Feedback by Topic



Types of Feedback



Gender



You can share information with us and respond to community complaints, questions and concerns through the **Community Voice** program.

Contact Philip Lukudu on Philip.James@cen-ss.org, or our Community Correspondents in Malakal.

The Community Engagement Network (CEN) has Community Correspondents in Renk who constantly engage the refugees and returnees to get feedback about their concerns.

They collaborate and coordinate with humanitarian agencies on relief aid to the affected populations.

The content is produced into broadcast of the Boda Boda Talk Talk programs.

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