



International Organization for Migration (IOM)  
The UN Migration Agency

Ref: IOM/JUB/MSB/29/10/2019

15 October 2019

## **Re: Request for Support in Establishment of new Humanitarian Hubs**

### **Situation**

Since the signing of a renewed peace agreement in September 2018, active conflict has been noticeably reduced and an increase in returns has been observed. However, the cumulative effects of years of conflict have translated to sustained poverty and persistent humanitarian and protection needs for more than 7 million people in the country. This is particularly the case in the Equatorias, Western Bahr el Ghazal, Jonglei, Upper Nile and Unity, where drivers and multipliers of crisis have persisted. As of September 2019, new research finds that 1.5 million individuals are internally displaced in South Sudan and more than 6.35 million people are severely food insecure.

Humanitarian organizations continue to provide support and assistance as prospects for peace and development improve and confidence is generated for durable solutions, including returns, relocations, or local integrations. Unfortunately, a lack of accommodation, work space and other key facilities often hinders humanitarian operations and a sustained presence in key strategic deep field locations. Consequently, UNOCHA in South Sudan approached IOM to request that IOM take the lead in upgrading and/or developing additional operational centres/humanitarian hubs. The development of additional humanitarian hubs will serve to enable humanitarian and development actors to set-up a permanent presence in these strategic locations with a long-term perspective.

As lead, IOM South Sudan aims to ensure that structures are in place to facilitate and support the effective, targeted delivery and monitoring of services to displaced populations. To facilitate and meet this objective, IOM is requesting the support of the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) to establish eight humanitarian hub base camps, starting with three pilot locations—Kodok, Kajo Keji, and Leer—with an expectation of expanding the intervention to encompass five other locations, based on the success and lessons learned from the establishment of the three initial hubs.

The requested humanitarian hubs will enable humanitarian agencies to rapidly establish or re-establish presence in areas in which people have been heavily affected by the ongoing conflict and subsequent outcomes, enhancing overall efficiency by providing stable and secure living and working conditions. Establishing the hubs will support the entire humanitarian community, providing common spaces to enable agencies to establish a sustained presence and deliver services to the most vulnerable. Additionally, the hubs will offer cost-effectiveness through reducing transportation and other costs.

### **Assessments and Proposed Locations**

The proposal to develop humanitarian hubs is aimed at enabling the expansion of operations across hard-to-reach areas of South Sudan through an increase in static humanitarian presence in key strategic deep field locations. Based on lengthy consultations with field offices and State Inter Cluster Working Groups (ICWG), sixteen potential locations were proposed, of which eight have been selected as proposed locations, namely Jiech, Kajo Keji, Kodok, Leer, Mandeng, New Fangak, Pieri, and Raja.



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The eight priority locations would provide field working facilities, accommodation and warehousing to enable agencies to maintain a continuous presence on the ground and international staff to overnight in these locations, as well as allow care of overflow of staff who are unable to find any other accommodation.

Based on the eight proposed locations, and further security/technical assessments undertaken, three pilot locations have been identified:

- 1) **Kajo Keji:** an inter-agency team undertook a response mission to Kajo Keji and the surrounding area in August 2019, accounting for the increased humanitarian needs of displaced people, returnees and host communities in the area. Emergency household items, food security and livelihoods support, and protection and health services constituted the key priorities of communities consulted. Health services in the area are particularly poor; some health centres were not functional, whilst others lacked medical supplies, especially anti-malarial medicine, and there were no health referral means in many of the places assessed. According to authorities, refugee returnees from Uganda have been arriving on a daily basis to maintain their homes and farms, whilst UNHCR predicts a further one million returnees in 2020. In recent years, the presence of humanitarian actors in Kajo Keji has been intermittent due to a volatile security situation, but there is scope to expand current compounds in this area through building a humanitarian hub. An NGO partner, American Refugee Committee (ARC), operates on land owned by the Episcopal Church (DOKK), and has expressed interest in partnering with IOM.
- 2) **Kodok:** located in Fashoda State, Kodok is a strategic location for humanitarian partners to respond to the needs of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Aburoc resulting both from returns from Sudan and displacements of Wau Shilluk, Lul or Kaka, which have been some of the hotspots in West Bank. A few INGOs already operate in Kodok, namely World Vision International (WVI), International Medical Corps (IMC), and the Danish Refugee Council (DRC). The INGOs are implementing a wide-range of services to support mainly IDPs in Aburoc and its surrounding areas, with WVI providing the majority of services, including food security and livelihoods, nutrition, education, and WASH support. Based on first and second round assessments, WVI could be a potential partner to IOM for management of the hub.
- 3) **Leer:** sustained conflict has destroyed livelihoods in Leer and the risk of a re-emergence of famine is high in this area. The impacts of violence are not limited to food security, as the destruction and looting of infrastructure has rendered many nutrition, health and education facilities unusable. As many communities retreated in small groups for safety to swampy areas that are hard to reach, these people are typically without access to critical services. UNHCR also predicts an additional 400,000 returnees from Ethiopia in 2020. Both UNIDOR and Hope Restoration South Sudan (HRSS) operate on the ground and have expressed interest in partnering with IOM concerning management of the hub.

**Structure:** Each upgraded compound converted into humanitarian hubs are envisioned to host and accommodate up to an additional 20 humanitarian workers at a time, and continuous rotation will allow the entire humanitarian community to benefit from the establishment of such hubs.





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The hubs will be used by all humanitarian partners in order to create an environment for aid workers to safely and comfortably undertake activities. Each humanitarian hub will provide sectioned accommodation for women and men, warehousing, communication services, security and office space to humanitarian workers. All humanitarian agencies and workers will have access to full accommodation, generators for power and electricity, latrines and ablutions, water purification, bunkers, fuel storage, a common kitchen, and sufficient office space to maintain communications with colleagues and co-agencies.

*Staffing and Base Management Agency:* Upon the completion of the humanitarian hubs, MSB will hand-over the management to IOM. IOM will in turn partner with the respective NGO at each hub location to capacitate on hub management and prepare the eventual handover of the hub management. If required, IOM may request the secondment of MSB technical staff to support the organizations taking final ownership of the hubs during the first three to six months of hand-over, to ensure proper running/management of the hubs and long-term sustainability herein.

*Logistics & Admin Support:* IOM will provide MSB with Logistics and Admin support during the entirety of the project implementation period.

*Security:* Assessments on priority locations have taken into consideration security of operations and personal safety of humanitarian actors. All compounds will have fencing and walls and access control systems. Agencies will be required to hire security guards and ensure compliance with overall security needs in the country. Having all personnel in one location will assist with managing evacuations if required.

IOM operates under the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) system and Security Risk Assessments (SRA) are conducted prior to all deployments. All MSB staff deployed to IOM under this project as standby personnel will follow IOM/UNDSS security protocols. Through the Staff Security Unit (SSU), IOM will analyse insecurity in the areas of project implementation and ensure that staff and office risks are mitigated. In order to address sporadic incidents of insecurity, a comprehensive and flexible security strategy is in place and provides for a tailored response to insecure conditions. For overall aspects of security, IOM is a member of the UNDSS, which includes local field structures as well as protocols for South Sudan, and oversight at the country level by the Security Management Team (SMT), which provides recommendations and consultation on security policy and criteria in coordination with the designated security representative of the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG), and the UN in New York.

*Assumptions and Risks:* The project assumes that sites for the humanitarian hubs will be safe and secure for the set-up phase, and the security of both materials and personnel in the locations. Risks include delays in selected sites being handed over by relevant authorities, lack of road access for the transport of locally-sourced construction materials, and delays in sub-contracting personnel.

All stakeholders note that the project is also dependent on the deadline of November 12 for the formation of an interim government. Risks outside the control of the project include delays as a result of inclement weather, political conflicts, and an outbreak of Ebola in South Sudan. If Ebola were to spread into areas where the hubs are being constructed, it is understood that MSB would pull-out and evacuate all personnel engaged.



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### **Exit Strategy and Handover**

IOM South Sudan has several years of experience in the management of humanitarian hubs, and currently administers three hubs, located in Malakal, Bentiu, and Bor, which provide accommodation and office space to over 400 humanitarian workers. Globally, IOM is able to draw on significant experience of managing humanitarian hubs from other IOM Country Offices in which hubs have been used through several phases of crises, from emergency assistance through transitional and early recovery phases. As an exit strategy, IOM will hand-over the management of the hubs and work on building the capacity of NGOs and local partners to ensure sustainable management of the humanitarian hubs.

IOM is grateful to MSB for considering this request. We look forward to your feedback and productive collaboration moving forward.

The International Organization for Migration in South Sudan avails itself of this opportunity to renew to MSB the assurances of its highest consideration.

Sincerely,

Jean-Philippe Chauzy  
Chief of Mission, IOM South Sudan

