

UN migration agency transports hundreds of South Sudanese refugees from border into Ethiopia

5 May 2017 – The United Nations migration agency has begun transferring South Sudanese refugees from Ethiopia's Pagak border entry point in Gambella to the Gore-Shembola refugee camp in Benishangul Gumuz Regional States approximately 835 kilometres away.

IOM [International Organization for Migration] has set up two way stations, one at Metu [275 km from the Pagak entry point] and the other at Gimbi [310 km from Metu], said Anezier Ebrahim, IOM Officer in charge of the operation, explaining the route taken to reach Gore-Shembola refugee camp in a press [release](#) announcing the effort, which began on 1 May.

The way stations have been constructed with the financial assistance of the United Kingdom Department for International Development and provide overnight accommodation, shelter and meals for refugees in transit from the border entry point to the camp, he continued.

With recent fighting and severe food insecurity further worsening the already dismal humanitarian situation in South Sudan, an additional 30,000 refugees are expected to enter Gambella over the coming months, according to IOM. Refugee camps in Gambella, one of Ethiopia's least developed regions, are currently at maximum capacity with the total number of South Sudanese refugees surpassing that of the local population.

In collaboration with the Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs and the Office of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)), IOM carried out an assessment of the potential route from Pagak border entry point to Gore-Shembola refugee camp in Benishangul, to ensure the safe and dignified migration of the refugees.

Prior to relocation, IOM provided pre-departure medical screenings to ensure that refugees are fit for travel, referring those who present medical concerns to local health facilities. IOM is also working in coordination with Plan International to provide psychosocial support and protection services for unaccompanied minors.

Nyakim and her four children are among the 365 refugees who were transferred to Gore-Shembola refugee camp in Benishangul this week. The struggles of the journey to reach Ethiopia are clearly visible all of her children suffer from skin rashes and a cough.

The journey from Jonglei to Pagak has been really difficult. We have walked for six days straight and my children and I have eaten only wild fruit from the forest, Nyakim said.

Renewed fighting led her to make the perilous journey for the safety of her children, leaving her husband behind.

IOM worked in collaboration with Action for the Needy in Ethiopia (ANE) for way station site preparations and the provision of latrines, showers and water.

Continued transportation assistance is urgently required to ensure newly arrived refugees' access to basic services in the camps. added Mr. Ebrahim, with the reminder that IOM remains committed to assist refugees with transportation from Pagak border entry point to Gore-Shembola refugee camp in the coming months.