

Methodology

The South Sudan population estimates are calculated annually on the sidelines of the Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC) analysis and endorsed by the humanitarian community as the Common Operational Datasets for population (COD-P). They are prepared for use in operational planning, including the IPC analysis and the annual HPC, in the absence of a recent census. The estimates consider South Sudanese nationals in South Sudan only, and not refugees and asylum seekers in and outside the country. The full dataset including sex and age disaggregation can be found on the Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX): <https://data.humdata.org/dataset/south-sudan-administrative-levels-0-2-2020-population-estimates>.

The estimates are a product of consultations and inputs from the South Sudan National Bureau of Statistics, the Food Security and Nutrition Monitoring System Plus (FSNMS+), the inter-agency Population Working Group, IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), UNHCR and OCHA, among other partners involved in population and mobility analysis.

The baseline for 2022 was run using a population estimation model that considered various assumptions and factors including conflict dynamics across the country to determine internally displaced people's (IDP) movements between counties; comparison between IOM DTM's mobility tracking Round 10 (March 2020) and Round 11 (September 2021) IDP baselines to include net internal displacements, pre-existing IDP concentration points e.g. in the Protection of Civilians (PoC) site, IDP camps and spontaneous sites as markers of where the displaced populations were likely to end up; external displacements outside the country i.e. South Sudanese refugees in the neighbouring countries; and year-on-year natural population dynamics such as growth through births and attrition through deaths.

Data included in the baseline

The baseline includes sex and age and disability disaggregation based on proportions from Round 25 of FSNMS – for gender and age and disability analysis to be used in the HPC analysis. IDP baseline, including IDPs in Malakal PoC site (based on Round 11 of IOM/DTM mobility tracking and assessment reports for locations not covered by DTM); spontaneous refugee returnees from UNHCR; and IDP returnees based on Round 11 of IOM/DTM mobility tracking are included in the baseline for sectoral analysis as needed.

Additional data included in the dataset for reference purposes

Additional data included in the dataset for reference purposes only are refugees inside South Sudan from UNHCR.

Main findings

The findings estimate the South Sudanese population in 2022 at 12.4 million, which represents an increase of 2.8 per cent from the 2021 estimates. Population growth was mainly attributed to population returns from the region, including spontaneous refugee returns and other migrants from abroad followed by births.

The country's demographic is made up of 50% males and 50% females. The population is young, with 54% of the South Sudanese people in-country under 18 years old. A total of 19% are children under 5 years old (10% and 9% male and female respectively) while 35% are 5-17 years old (18% and 17% male and female respectively). Adults of 18-60 years old represent 39% of the population (19% and 20% male and female respectively). Older people of 60 years and above represent 7% of the population (3% and 4% male and female respectively).

There are around 2.0 million internally displaced people (including 37,000 in the PoC sites as of September 2021), 1.78 million returnees (as of DTM Round 11) and 326,000 spontaneous refugee returnees (as of UNHCR reporting in September 2021). In addition, South Sudan hosts an estimated 329,000 refugees, mainly from the Republic of the Sudan, who are not included in the 12.4 million population baseline.

Outside the country, there are 2.3 million South Sudanese refugees as registered and verified by UNHCR. They are not included in the baseline. However, the 326,000 spontaneous refugee returnees in South Sudan still hold refugee status in the region and are likely double counted as refugees and as spontaneous refugee returnees inside South Sudan.

How to use the data for 2022 HPC

The South Sudan population baseline will be used for 2022 county-level needs and response analysis calculations disaggregated by population groups – host community/ non-displaced, IDPs and returnees. The sectoral analysis will draw data from the overall county population for the county PiN calculations, and clusters would use the population sub-groups provided with the dataset in their sectoral analysis as needed.

The refugees inside South Sudan data will be used in the refugee needs analysis for sectors that will target refugees with some form of assistance in the 2022 response plan.