

Key messages

- South Sudan's baseline on internally displaced persons (IDPs) was reset from 1,829,223 individuals reported in the July 2019 Humanitarian Snapshot to 1,465,542 individuals reported in the August 2019 Snapshot.
- The reduction of more than 360,000 individuals does not reflect the actual change in IDP numbers between July and August. The real net decrease in the IDP figure during the one-month period is 26,302 individuals.
- Instead, the drop in numbers represents the culmination of an 18-month-long review and rationalization exercise between IDP datasets maintained by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the International Organization for Migration's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM). The large-scale reduction in the IDP count is specifically caused by updating data through revisiting locations and obtaining new population estimates, and reviewing all data for potential duplications.
- Moving forward, OCHA and DTM will maintain a unified IDP baseline for South Sudan, updated after the release of every new DTM mobility tracking round, approximately four times a year.
- The 2020 Humanitarian Needs Overview for South Sudan will use the previous, 1.8 million IDP baseline, as the population groups for the needs analysis were established before the new baseline was set.

Overview of data rationalization process

For the past 18 months, OCHA has been working closely with DTM to gradually update South Sudan's baseline on IDPs. The IOM DTM Mobility Tracking exercise published its first round of data in March 2018, at the time covering 230 locations in 93 payams (sub-areas) across 23 counties. Its latest data collection exercise, DTM Round 6, expanded coverage to 2,312 locations in 470 payams across all 78 counties of South Sudan. The findings are due to be published in September 2019.

As the coverage of DTM's mobility tracking increased, OCHA and DTM undertook multiple rounds of data review and consolidation between their respective datasets. Together, the two organizations identified outdated datapoints for deletion (threshold of more than 2 years old), former datapoints to update with fresh data and duplicate locations to remove. In September 2019, the process culminated in a new IDP baseline of 1,465,542 IDPs as of August 2019, compared to 1,829,223 reported as of July 2019.

The drop of 363,681 individuals does not reflect the actual change in the amount of IDPs between July and August. Instead, the reduction in numbers represents the culmination of the data rationalization process and is specifically caused by seeking partner feedback on locations which had not been updated in several months (59 per cent of total decrease); removing duplicate locations between the two datasets (29 per cent); updating data through revisiting locations and obtaining new population estimates (7 per cent of total decrease); and removing static data (5 per cent). Discounting changes due to the updating or removal data, the IDP count decreased by net 26,302 individuals between July and August. This equates to a less than 2 per cent decrease when comparing only locations which are now maintained in the harmonized IDP dataset.

Methodological details

- A total of 111 locations were part of the OCHA dataset but had not been covered in DTM Round 6. DTM focal points were able to confirm through phone calls with enumerators in the field that 38 of these locations no longer hosted IDPs. This accounts for a drop of 153,460 individuals, mainly in Jonglei, Upper Nile and Western Equatoria. One location was confirmed and maintained in the dataset. For the other 72 locations, **no party was able to affirm continued presence of IDPs** when OCHA sought feedback from humanitarian organizations through its field offices. These locations accounted for 62,115 individuals in the July IDP count. For 59 of these locations, representing 41,728 individuals, data was more than 9 months old. The removal of 110 locations accounts for 59 per cent of the decrease.
- Thirty-four locations were identified as **duplicate locations** between the two datasets, including locations where DTM covers sub-areas. Removal of these locations accounted for 104,130 individuals and 29 per cent of the total decrease.
- DTM **updated previously available data** across 2,096 locations, leading to a net decrease of 26,302 individuals or 7 per cent of the total decrease. Overall, 902 locations experienced an increase of combined 326,662 individuals while 757 locations saw a decrease of combined 352,964 individuals. Another 437 locations remained static. The biggest decrease was in Nassir County with 81,943 individuals deleted from the IDP count, due to more accurate biometric registration data becoming available since July. Other counties experiencing a decrease of more than 10,000 IDPs between July and August were Awerial, Aweil East, Tonj North and Jur River.
- **Static data** that was older than 2 years was removed in three locations, leading to a drop of 17,674 individuals. This accounts for a total 5 per cent of the decrease in the baseline number of IDPs.
- The annexed Excel table illustrates the variations per county.