

# IOM targets nearly 10,000 ex-combatants in S. Sudan

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April 13, 2011 (JUBA) - The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has stepped up its efforts to ensure that over 10,000 ex-combatants are re-integrated in three selected states of South Sudan prior to the country's July independence.

The process, which involves offering re-integration packages to these former combatants, is being undertaken in collaboration with the southern government, local non-governmental organizations, the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), civil society and community-based entities.

The initiative, earmarked for Western Bahr El Ghazal, Northern Bahr El Ghazal and Warrap states, is part of South Sudan's Disarmament, Demobilization and Re-integration (DDR) program. The current DDR program was an integral part of the Sudan's 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).



The CPA, which allowed the south to self-govern, also granted the region the right to secede through a referendum. In January 2005 southern Sudanese voted almost unanimously to separate from the north and form its own country.

Since 2005 the IOM says it has provided reintegration assistance for more than 510,000 returnees in the semi-autonomous region, including carrying out surveys in returnees' areas of nearly 7,000 villages within the three targeted states.

With an estimated \$8.8m earmarked for IOM's DDR program embarked on in June 2010, the process is due to continue until August this year. The re-integration of these ex-combatants, including women involves helping them to develop skills needed for productive and sustainable livelihoods.

Already, 5,800 ex-combatants in Northern and Western Bahr El Ghazal have reportedly been referred to IOM for reintegration assistance. An additional 5,000 ex-combatants in Warrap are expected to take part in the program when it begins there later this year.

These ex-combatants reportedly undergo literacy, numeracy and entrepreneurship training programs, with four reintegration packages taken into consideration. They can decide between civilian life skills, literacy, agriculture or entrepreneurship training.

Recently, the Southern Sudan DDR Commission (SSDDRC) embarked on preparing new policy guidelines meant for the second phase of the program. These new policies are being developed by a technical committee of 10 senior officers from both SSDDRC and South Sudan's army (SPLA).

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