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Job Title:	Conflict Sensitive Returns and Integration Research Consultant
Location:	Juba
Reporting to:	CSRF Director
Type of position/Contract:	Consultant – Short term



1) Summary:

The Conflict Sensitivity Resource Facility (CSRF), funded by the government of the UK, Switzerland, Canada and Netherlands-with additional funding from the EU, supports the aid community in South Sudan through the provision of technical analysis, services and advice with the objective of integrating conflict sensitive principles and practices into programming strategies in South Sudan. Conflict sensitivity is an approach that emphasises strong contextual analysis and programmatic flexibility to minimise aid’s negative consequences and maximise its positive impacts. Conflict sensitivity is particularly important in volatile, conflict-affected contexts where inadequate understanding of conflict and political dynamics can lead to donors and implementing partners inadvertently exacerbating conflict.

The CSRF is looking for a consultant(s) to work with us to deliver the research outlined below, which will result in two interlinked documents: a research paper (20 pages) and a good practice guidance paper (5 pages). Consultants may apply individually, or submit applications as a small team of 2-3 people based on specific roles/contributions. Consultants are expected to work collaboratively with the CSRF team throughout the process. There may be an opportunity to extend the contract for further convening and analysis based on funding availability. The CSRF recommend teams inclusive of South Sudanese researchers and women.

2) Background:

On 11 September 2018, South Sudanese parties signed the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS), which stipulated ‘a pre-transition period of eight months leading to the formation of a new transitional government of national unity, to govern during a three-year transitional period that will culminate in elections. The pre-transitional period was extended twice, before a Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity (R-TGoNU) was formed on 21 February 2020,¹ with elections originally planned in 2022 extended to 2024. Significant processes were initiated, including in relation to the establishment of national- and state-level institutions, the dissolution of the previous national assembly and agreement on its new composition, as well as the commencement of the constitution-making process.

On 15 April 2023, a conflict in Sudan broke out between, the paramilitary group, the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the Sudanese Armed Force (SAF)². The UN, international NGOs

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(INGOs), national NGOs (NNGOs) and the private sector mobilised immediately to support the Government of South Sudan in assisting people in need in hard-to-reach areas with very limited infrastructure, particularly in the most remote border areas, where host communities are already extremely vulnerable. The Government of South Sudan identified main border entry points where it was expected to receive large numbers of cross-border movements. In these locations, the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC)³, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) began collecting data at 27 points of entry, setting up transit facilities and supporting voluntary movement of individuals to various areas, including areas of origin⁴. From 16 April 2023 – until the time of writing, 9th September 2023, 256,920 people⁵ (women: 130,218 and men: 126,702)[sex and age break down can be accessed in the footnote]⁶ have crossed from Sudan into South Sudan.

Previously, since the signing of the R-ARCSS in October 2018, an estimated 158,000 South Sudanese had spontaneously and independently returned from Sudan, of whom 80% had been registered refugees in Sudan. However, since the Sudan's current conflict started⁵, 'returns' have been mostly from Khartoum, and people reach the border exhausted and without enough money to proceed to their intended destination, or without a clear intended destination in mind.

According to intention surveys and assessment by aid actors, many 'returnees'⁶ are severely vulnerable and in need of immediate assistance. As of 7th September, the majority of arrivals were through the Jouda Border Crossing Point into Renk, Upper Nile State, arriving largely from Khartoum, many of these South Sudanese returns were in transit, requesting transport onwards to Malakal, Upper Nile State, Jonglei Unity and Juba, Central Equatoria. Additional arrivals into Northern and Western Bahr el Ghazal States, fleeing the Darfur region of Sudan and into Panukuach, Unity State⁹. As the fighting in Sudan has continued, 'returns' patterns could change.

The 2023 OCHA Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP)¹⁰ estimated that 9.4 million people in South Sudan [including 2.2 million women, 4.9 million children and 337,000 refugees, and 1.4 million returnees], in need humanitarian assistance, prior to the Sudan crisis. Protection concerns remain high for people of all genders and ages. According to the Inter-Sector Needs Assessment (ISNA, 2022) 21% of households that had returned after displacement to their areas of origin reported that their children do not attend school. Main challenges pertained to fees, school closure due to conflict, and lack of school materials. For returns from Sudan, most children have been learning in the arabic pattern, whereas in South Sudan, the English pattern is taught. Moreover, South Sudan is also one of the worst food insecurity emergencies in the world. Returnees are particularly vulnerable. According to the ISNA, 75% of the returnee households reported food as a priority need, followed by shelter (61%) and health care (53%). Mental health and psychosocial needs amongst displaced communities, including returnees remain elevated and largely unaddressed. The ongoing



2



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violence in South Sudan has had major effects on the psychological well-being of the South Sudanese population, whereas returnees, refugees and other forcibly displaced South Sudanese continue to cope with losses, family disruptions and disconnection from their community support systems.

Whilst due to the current conflict in Sudan, returns have been monitored closely there is also anecdotal evidence that dwindling food rations in Ugandan refugee camps and conflict in Ethiopia's Gambella region have increased numbers of South Sudanese returns from refugee camps in those countries as well.

The conflict in Sudan has already impacted South Sudan's economic outlook, particularly for northern States that are largely dependent on imports from Sudan and where the prices of basic commodities are skyrocketing. The Sudan-South Sudan border has been actively used by refugees, migrants, and South Sudanese, as well as for business and the northern states of South Sudan relies heavily on this cross-border trade, additionally substituting these markets with imports from other areas of South Sudan are challenging given the logistical constraints in South Sudan, mainly due to poor road networks, flooding and high costs for hiring cargo space on air assets or barges. Fuel cost has spiked up to 60% within two weeks and food prices are up by more than 30% in some areas, and they are likely to increase further. The high costs of assisting population movements to easier-to-access areas via air and limited options to relocate those who have been displaced by road during the rainy season will likely limit people's ability to move between areas and will place increased pressure on humanitarian use of waterway transportation infrastructure to assist refugees, returnees, and third country nationals at borders and transit facilities.

However, despite some efforts to respond coherently across humanitarian, development and peace Nexus, the emphasis has been primarily on short-term relief. People continue to suffer, with a protracted crisis compounded by food insecurity and the severe impact of climate change⁷ and peace and security remain fragile.

3) Research outline:

The primary intended audience for this paper is aid practitioners, those designing or implementing aid programmes, and donors with influence over the aid sector in South Sudan. The CSRF seeks to produce analysis and research that is relevant to donors, UN agencies, and NGOs (both international and national), with guidance on practical recommendations for policy and practice. The CSRF aims to use this analysis/research process to help the aid practitioners to be aware of and access available research and expertise, to generate enthusiasm and commitment from aid actors across the spectrum to participate in collective analysis discussions, and to work collaboratively to apply new tools and solutions to how they work – as individuals, organisations, and as a system. It should help to inform everyday practice, policy level discussions, as well as the design and oversight of aid programmes and how it will add value.



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The overall objective of this research is to provide donors and aid practitioners with a stronger understanding of the risks and opportunities associated with 'returns and reintegration' to South Sudan, so that they can take better decisions about where, how and when to support developmental investments in ways that will maximise their overall contribution to peace for the South Sudan people.

Understanding the different definitions of Return, used in the South Sudan context:

Return to South Sudan is not uncommon. Following the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), South Sudan experienced ongoing returns between 2005 and 2011. People also returned prior to the referendum for independence primarily to exercise their rights to vote and to avoid the risk of potential separation, and after Independence in July 2011, believing their country of origin had improved, or, conversely, because conditions in their host country had deteriorated, economically, socially, politically or environmentally in comparison. The Government of South Sudan was able to actively solicit the return of their nationals/diaspora members from abroad, particularly those who are highly skilled, for temporary, permanent or even virtual return, to contribute to their human and financial capital, or to elections and the referendum on independence in 2011 for the development of their home country.

However, in the case of recent South Sudanese returns from Sudan, it has been acknowledged that some of the returns have married Sudanese and now have children and extended family who are Sudanese nationals. Others have arrived to South Sudan no longer having connections to housing, land, property (HLP) or kinship systems. Other South Sudanese nationals have spent their whole lives in Sudan, yet have not sought asylum and have no connection to HLP or kinship systems in South Sudan and have lived different lifestyles in more urban areas and are returning to more rural areas.

IOM, UNHCR and OCHA's definitions of returns differ. IOM defines a returnee as, 'Someone who was displaced from their habitual residence either within South Sudan or abroad, who has since returned to their habitual residence'. However, IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) restricts the category of returnee to individuals who returned to the exact location of their habitual residence, or an adjacent area based on a free decision. IOM views reintegration to be sustainable when 'returnees have reached levels of economic self-sufficiency, social stability within their communities, and psychosocial well-being that allow them to cope with (re)migration drivers. Having achieved sustainable reintegration, returnees are able to make further migration decisions a matter of choice, rather than necessity'. This definition highlights the multidimensional nature of a reintegration process – physical/security, economic, social and psychosocial – and the need to approach migrant reintegration in a comprehensive manner, considering the factors that can affect reintegration at the individual, community and structural levels⁸. Those who were displaced or moved to Sudan as a child have spent much of their childhood and adulthood in Sudan, often becoming accustomed to life and livelihoods in urban areas that bear little resemblance to those where they were born or brought up in South Sudan.



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In contrast, UNHCR defines returnees as "former refugees who have returned to their country of origin spontaneously or in an organized fashion but have not yet been fully (re)integrated." Therefore, UNHCR would also count as returnees, persons who returned from abroad and find themselves in a situation of continued displacement (IOM would consider someone in this situation to still be an IDP) or who have chosen a new habitual residence (IOM would consider someone in this situation to be relocated). Whilst OCHA in the South Sudan HRP, 2023, defines a 'persons who have been displaced from their habitual residence, either within South Sudan or abroad, who have since returned to their habitual residence. For OCHA, this category is restricted to individuals who returned to the exact location of their 'habitual residence or an adjacent area based on free decision anytime since 2014. Displaced South Sudanese people crossing the border into South Sudan from the neighbouring countries, who have not returned to their original homes, are still considered displaced'. Stories of the complexity 'returnees' are facing have already been documented by the New Humanitarian.

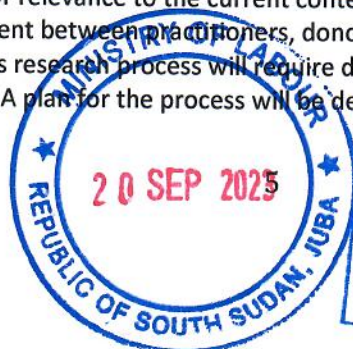
Research questions (to be refined further based on consultations):

The following questions will provide an opportunity to capture practical learning on policy and programming responses to 'returns', to learn from previous experience of efforts towards integrated approaches, and to highlight key challenges and opportunities which are particularly important in the future context, exploring linkages across the humanitarian development peace Nexus to complement the durable solutions lens.

- What does 'returnee' and 'integration' mean in the current context of South Sudan and who is eligible for assistance?
 - Historic perspective
 - Lessons from South Sudan (UN, INGOs/NNGOs, local actors, Church and other Faith based actors)
 - Lessons on donor experience
 - Lessons from South Sudanese academics
- What lessons are there from previous aid engagement responding to returns and re-integrating in South Sudan?
- What opportunities, risks and dilemmas should aid practitioners and policy makers consider when responding in areas where there are currently high numbers of returnees, given the current wider context including election planning, multi-level conflict dynamics, the transition period, end of R-ARCCS and climate change/crises?
- What approaches, actions or principles would improve coherence between humanitarian, development, peacebuilding programming in South Sudan to support conflict-sensitive 'returns and integration'?

4) Research process:

This activity will put a strong emphasis on "process" alongside "product." Relevant literature should be reviewed for relevance to the current context, however, the CSRF will also seek to build strong engagement between practitioners, donors, analysts and academics working in South Sudan now. This research process will require desk-based research and field research in selected locations. A plan for the process will be developed in cooperation with the CSRF



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team, and the researcher(s) will work closely with the CSRF team throughout the process. Such a plan might include:

- Initial consultation with key stakeholders (facilitated by CSRF)
- Desk research (including literature review)
- Interviews with relevant key informants
- Field research – 3 location(s) TBD
- Presentations of initial findings/recommendations to select target groups
- Submission of draft report
- Incorporate comments from CSRF team
- Final draft
- Roundtable and discussion with policy makers and practitioners
- Further dissemination strategy TBD
- Follow up analysis based on findings from round table discussions with policy makers and practitioners (please note this would be a decision made by the CSRF at the end of the contract)
- Process will be finalised in discussion with the consultant(s).

5) Outputs:

This research process aims to examine the suggested questions below, resulting in two interlinked documents: a research paper focused on informing aid strategies (20 pages, with a short executive summary and recommendations that have been tested/validated with practitioners working in South Sudan) and a good practice guidance paper (5 pages).

6) Timeline:

The final timeline will be agreed with the CSRF pending selection. The process is due to start in early October, with final documents due in December 2023 at the latest. Allocation of days within this time period will be agreed with consultant(s).

7) Requirements:

The CSRF is looking to contract consultants with the following profile:

- Excellent understanding of the context of South Sudan, especially in relation to the aid sector;
- Research and/or practitioner experience relevant to the subject matter (e.g. returns, integration, durable solutions and the HDP nexus);
- Excellent understanding of conflict and gender sensitivity principles and practice in South Sudan;
- Strong network of relevant key informants;
- Experience conducting reviews of large volume of documents and data;
- Demonstrated ability to handle and communicate sensitive information;
- Demonstrated ability to produce clear, quality written content in English;
- Availability to begin work within the expected timeframe.



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8) To apply:

Applicants should submit a cover letter that explains their interest, skills, proposed approach, relevant expertise and availability in doing some or all of the work described, as well as a daily rate.

- Include your CV which should include at least two references and at least two examples of previous research or analysis (ideally where the applicant is the lead author)
- Deadline for applications is 9th October 2023, 4:30pm CAT
- Please send your expression of interest to info@csrf-southsudan.org Or Hand delivery to Saferworld main Office Opposite Watoto Church along American Resident-Kololo.

