

## New camp for South Sudan refugees urgently needed

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Leitchour refugee camp in Gambela region of western Ethiopia was built in January to host South Sudanese fleeing the war. Unfortunately, the camp was built on a flood plain. Flood waters have rendered most structures useless. Sign posts erected by aid workers only months earlier still stand beside the lonely buildings. At the height of the flooding, thousands of families, both refugees and local villagers moved to safer grounds.

With the end of the rainy season, flood waters are receding. However, this raises the fears of another refugee influx yet there is no room to take them in. Funding for this refugee crisis is low. The World Food Programme has already issued a warning saying that with the current funds, it can only supply food until the end of the year. With a political solution to the crisis in South Sudan far from sight, aid workers are struggling to give the distressed refugees the basic survival services in desolate conditions.



Leitchour refugee camp in *Gambela, western Ethiopia* has been under water since the rains began this past June, leaving over 47 000 refugees in distress. © EU/ECHO Martin Karimi



Most refugees were displaced by the floods fleeing to higher ground, mainly along the raised access roads, where many still remain. This camp is still not accessible by road, the floods having cut-off the link road. © EU/ECHO Martin Karimi



Refugees and villagers wade through knee-high dark brown waters. But they say the situation is much better now. At the peak of the rainy season, movement was impossible, except by boat. © EU/ECHO Martin Karimi



Johan Heffinck, the head of ECHO in Ethiopia says a speedy solution is needed and especially urges the Government of Ethiopia to identify appropriate land where these refugees could be relocated to. © EU/ECHO Martin Karimi



ECHO has spent around 16 million euros on life-saving assistance to South Sudan refugees in Ethiopia since the crisis began. The funding has enabled provision of food, nutrition and health services, water and sanitation, shelter, and child protection in camps and transit centres. © EU/ECHO Martin Karimi



Since December 2013, conflict in South Sudan has uprooted about 474,000 people across the borders, with about 193,000 streaming into camps in western Ethiopia. Pagak border centre was one of the busiest. © EU/ECHO Martin Karimi



The rainy season has ended and the flood waters are receding. But it is feared that fighting will flare up again inside South Sudan, pushing more people out. © EU/ECHO Martin Karimi



It is estimated that hundreds are held up in villages close to Ethiopia, waiting to cross the border. With the camps operating at full capacity, aid agencies fear refugees will arrive and choke the transit centres very quickly since they will have no place to go. © EU/ECHO Martin Karimi