



IOM and the Government of Sudan evacuate Sudanese migrants from Bangui

16th January 2014- At the request of the Government of Sudan, IOM immediately assisted in the evacuation of 110 Sudanese migrants from the Central African Republic (CAR). The migrants who had been stranded due to the fighting in the country were evacuated from the capital city of Bangui. As a result of the ongoing conflict more than 300 Sudanese nationals, including those evacuated by IOM, were forced to seek safety in the house of the military attaché of the Sudanese Embassy in Bangui before safely returning home. “We have lost everything we labored for but we thank IOM for rescuing us and we hope we can start life again” said K.A. a 22 year old returnee. Many have returned home destitute and traumatized by the violence that they have seen. “I'm very happy to come back home. We didn't sleep at night out of fear for our lives. We have lost all our belongings” said H. M. who had been in CAR for the last 13 years.

The returnees were welcomed at the Khartoum International Airport by the IOM team in Sudan and government officials headed by Mr. Karar al Tohami, Secretary General of the Secretariat for Sudanese Working Abroad (SSWA). IOM Sudan provided accommodation, medical screening and follow up for those who needed specialized care, and onwards transportation for migrants returning to



communities of origin outside the capital. Out of the 110 returnees, 37 were transported to the towns of Zalingei, El Geneina and Nyala in the Darfur states.

The conflict in the Central African Republic (CAR) has displaced some 935,000 people, more than half (513,000) are in Bangui alone. Thousands of homes have been damaged and looted. Many displaced families are seeking shelter in churches and schools, as well as in the airport camp. According to IOM staff in Bangui, over 60,000 migrants have already asked their embassies to help them to leave the country since the beginning of the crisis and at least 33,000 still need to be evacuated. “The evacuation of these migrants must be done quickly and in an orderly manner to avoid people trying to leave

on their own overland and taking terrible risks, in desperation,” said IOM West Africa Director Carmela Godeau.

The instability and lack of security in the region (CAR and South Sudan), compounded by the drastic change in legislation in labour receiving countries, will inevitably force more Sudanese migrants to return home. The majority will return having lost their jobs and most of their belongings. This sudden return will have a severe effect on families who depended solely on remittances provided by their relatives abroad. The expected increase in the number of Sudanese returnees calls for the establishment of a reintegration programme to support those vulnerable families in rebuilding a new life in their country of origin.

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