

UN migration agency expands HIV/AIDS services in South Sudan displacement sites

8 November 2017 – Thanks to the recent expansion of HIV/AIDS services conducted by the United Nations migration agency, some 171,000 civilians and their host communities have gained benefit from these health facilities in South Sudan.

“The [expansion of services](#) is a crucial development in South Sudan, where internally displaced persons, such as those living in the PoC [Protection of Civilian] sites, are among key populations that are considered to be at higher-risk of contracting HIV/AIDS,” Salma Taher, Global Fund Project Officer of the UN International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)), explained the significance of this roll out.

Last year, along with tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS was one of the leading causes of mortality in the PoC sites, where people are often unable to access to health facilities outside the sites due to safety or weak infrastructure.

Since the roll out began, at protection sites in Bentiu, Malakal and Wau, in July, IOM has tested 213 people, with 16 testing positive and enrolling in antiretroviral treatment.

With timely diagnosis and antiretroviral treatment, the life expectancy of HIV-positive patients has been proven to improve substantially, for about an additional 10 years, according to a recent study.

The new comprehensive services are made possible for the broader public visiting the sites, rather than previously just services for pregnant mothers.

Moreover, HIV/AIDS awareness-raising campaigns are carried out, and hundreds of peer counselors are being trained across the country.

Mental health and psychosocial support are also provided to people living with HIV/AIDS and those affected by gender-based violence.

This expansion of health services is a joint effort of IOM, the UN Development Fund, and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.