

FAST FACTS

United Nations Development Programme



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South Sudanese civilians load a truck in preparation for crossing the border into Uganda to escape continued violence. Photo: UNHCR

Crisis in South Sudan

In South Sudan, the world's youngest nation, violence, which began in mid-December 2013, continues to cause chaos.

The unrest is the culmination of a long-simmering power struggle within the ruling party, that deteriorated into violent conflict and large scale defections from the army. Fighting has further exacerbated the fragility of South Sudan's political situation, exposed ethnic fault lines and highlighted the underlying lack of nationally driven social cohesion.

People in South Sudan face urgent humanitarian and development needs. It is estimated that more than 800,000 people had been displaced from their homes by late February 2014. Thousands have been killed or wounded in the fighting. Hundreds of thousands have lost livelihoods and access to basic services. Around 3.7 million South Sudanese are facing acute food insecurity and this number is likely to increase if the crisis continues and farm outputs remain affected. In addition, when the rainy season occurs (as early as April in some parts of the country), remote villages are likely to be inaccessible by road, increasing the risk of further disruption to the agricultural cycle.

The current fighting in South Sudan will have long-lasting consequences for the country, rolling back years of development achievements and a hard won peace, increasing poverty, as well as long-term insecurity and vulnerability to future shocks. The capacity of government institutions to provide basic services, such as education, food assistance, health care – including uninterrupted access to HIV/AIDS and TB treatment, protection, and water and sanitation programmes has been seriously undermined – especially in the three most affected states. Consequently, chronically vulnerable populations, particularly women and children, now require further assistance.

Refocusing Support for South Sudan

While the humanitarian needs of people in South Sudan require urgent attention, helping the country to emerge from the current crisis and preventing future ones will require increased focus on addressing the deep-rooted and underlying causes of conflict. The international community and national partners will need to support national healing, peace and reconciliation as well as increased civic engagement in the constitutional review process; widen the space for debate within political parties and civil society/communities; and improve access to justice, the rule of law and related

conflict prevention initiatives, complemented by early recovery efforts. There is an urgent need to build peace and strengthen social cohesion amongst affected communities and political groups, while focusing on long-term development needs at all levels in the country.

At the same time, the current crisis calls for continued efforts to build institutions and strengthen service delivery.

UNDP's Present and Future Approach

UNDP in South Sudan has continued to operate in spite of the current crisis, supporting national, state and local governments to deliver development services, as well as community security and stabilization for at-risk communities.

Work has focused on the national peace institutions, and management of the Common Humanitarian Fund that facilitates and coordinates the international community's response to the most critical humanitarian needs. In addition, UNDP continues to manage a vast portfolio of the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, providing life-saving treatment in seven of the country's ten states, including for those displaced by fighting.

UNDP is also supporting capacity building efforts in national and state civil service institutions through the deployment of Civil Service Support Officers.

In light of the crisis, in the short-term, with national partners, UNDP will focus on the following three priorities:

- Support nationally-led processes for peacebuilding, national healing and reconciliation through assistance to the country's three peace and reconciliation institutions. UNDP will help build "peace architecture," such as a conflict early warning system and the creation of peace networks through young people, women, the media, civil society, academia, and religious and traditional leaders. UNDP will also undertake a survey to collect and analyze public perceptions of the root causes of the present conflict to assist in mediation and reconciliation efforts;
- Promote a culture in which disputes are settled peacefully to stabilize communities, make them more secure and support the voluntary, safe and dignified return of people displaced by the fighting to their homes. To that end, UNDP aims to facilitate local dialogue and conduct public awareness campaigns in collaboration with local media. UNDP will seek ways to improve community security and, support the Council of Traditional Authorities and Leaders to establish grassroots transitional justice initiatives and other legal mechanisms that support truth and reconciliation processes; and



South Sudanese displaced by fighting. Photo: UNHCR

- With other development partners, restore basic livelihoods through emergency employment schemes, vocational training and assistance to businesses, and rebuild infrastructure and local services in conflict-affected areas. This will help with the resumption of economic and business activity, ensure the smooth return and reintegration of displaced people, while reducing the chance that they will fall further into poverty, and promote early recovery and the creation of jobs. UNDP will also set up grassroots initiatives between communities and local development officials that ensure essential development needs are prioritized.

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Updated March 2014



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