



## South Sudan crisis

ECHO FACTSHEET

### Facts & Figures:

About 4.9 million (=41.7% of the population) severely food insecure & 1 million on the brink of starvation (IPC Jan 2017)

250 000 children are severely malnourished

Since fighting erupted in December 2013:

More than 1.85 million people internally displaced including over 223 926 at UN Mission (UNMISS) compounds (UNMISS 20 Feb)

Over 1.5 million South Sudanese refugees in neighbouring countries (UNHCR 31 Jan)

67 aid workers killed by warring parties (UNOCHA)

Number of refugees from neighbouring countries in South Sudan: 262 560 (UNHCR 31 Jan)

European Commission humanitarian assistance since fighting erupted in 2013:

€423 million

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People fleeing violence and starvation in Unity state. ©EU/EC/Anouk Delafortrie

### Key messages

- The man-made crisis in South Sudan has reached alarming proportions.
- **The UN has declared famine in two counties of South Sudan** in February 2017, where 100 000 people are experiencing famine and another one million are on the brink of starvation in humanitarian emergency. 4.9 million people will experience severe food insecurity from now until April and about **47% of the population** (5.5 million people) is expected to be severely food insecure in July, at the peak of the lean season.
- After the UN declared famine, the EU stepped up its help: EU humanitarian aid reaches €82 million in 2017, out of which about 30% goes to life-saving food assistance.
- **The fall-out of the South Sudan crisis on the region is massive.** More than one and a half million refugees have sought protection in neighbouring countries, and thousands continue to do so each day, dramatically increasing pressure on resources and living conditions in host countries. About 1.9 million people are also internally displaced within South Sudan, out of which 224 000 have sought protection in overcrowded sites on UN military base camps.
- **Fighting, violations of international humanitarian law and grave human rights abuses continue unabated.** Civilians targeted by all armed forces, often with an ethnic intent. There is widespread gender based sexual violence.
- **Restrictions and violence continue to obstruct humanitarian aid.** Since the beginning of the conflict, 67 humanitarian workers have been killed. Safe and unhindered access to populations in need must be granted.
- The EU is among the biggest donors of humanitarian aid in South Sudan.

## Humanitarian situation and needs

As the youngest and one of the least developed countries in the world, South Sudan suffers from decades of conflict and neglect, corruption and mismanagement. Despite a 2015 peace agreement, the conflict which was initially confined to 3 states has gradually expanded across the country. Extreme violence coupled with an economic crisis and worsening food insecurity has led to a crisis of unprecedented proportions.

Extreme levels of food insecurity are expected across South Sudan through the first half of 2017. The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) estimates that 5.5 million people will be severely food insecure. 100 000 people are about to succumb to famine in two counties of Unity state, according to the UN. In the Greater Equatoria region, traditionally considered the country's bread basket, violence has disrupted food supply routes and an estimated 50% of all harvests have been lost in the conflict-affected areas.

This man-made humanitarian disaster has left at least 1.89 million people internally displaced, mostly due to widespread violence against civilians. Almost 224 000 people have taken refuge in overcrowded protection-of-civilian (PoC) sites at 6 UN bases, and a staggering 1.5 million South Sudanese have taken refuge in [Ethiopia](#), [Kenya](#), [Sudan](#) and [Uganda](#). More than 725 000 South Sudanese are now being hosted in Uganda where authorities are trying to keep up with the mass influx by identifying new settlements for the refugees. Every day, on average 4700 refugees continue to cross into Uganda. The South Sudanese crisis could have a destabilising effect on the wider region, parts of which are experiencing severe drought and food shortages after consecutive failed rainy seasons.

The health care sector is in dire straits. Since December 2013, 106 health facilities have been closed, while many others have been looted or destroyed. With more than 2 million cases and 558 deaths, malaria was the leading cause of death and illness in 2016. South Sudan also continues to experience its longest cholera outbreak in recent years, with 3962 cases including 75 deaths since June 2016. There were also numerous measles outbreaks. The disease is particularly life-threatening for children under the age of five, especially when malnourished. The capacity of the health system to deliver effective services pales in comparison to the magnitude of needs. It depends nearly entirely on humanitarian assistance, which is subject to funding and access constraints.

Humanitarian aid is delivered in extremely challenging circumstances, when and where possible. Violence, harassment and intimidation against humanitarian workers have already resulted in the death of 67 aid workers since December 2013 and continue to hamper the work of organisations. Moreover, humanitarian workers are faced with seizure of their assets, illegal obstructions and efforts to tax and divert relief aid. The recent fighting has provided a cover for the widespread and systematic looting by all armed forces.

## The European Union's Humanitarian Response

Following an announcement of further funding in February 2017, the European Commission has, to date, made more than €423 million available to respond to the worsening humanitarian crisis in South Sudan since fighting erupted in December 2013. Its funds support food assistance; health and nutrition; water, sanitation and hygiene interventions; education as well as shelter and protection for the most vulnerable populations. Support is provided to reduce the incidence of malaria and to respond to an increase in measles cases and epidemics such as cholera and Hepatitis E.

A team of European Commission humanitarian experts is permanently based in the country. They liaise with partner organisations, coordinate response efforts with both EU and non-EU donors, and closely monitor developments as well as the efficient use of EU humanitarian funds.



## Examples of EU funded projects



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### Health and nutrition

South Sudan has some of the worst health and nutrition indicators in the world. Access to quality healthcare is a challenge due to low government expenditure, underdevelopment, lack of skilled health personnel and the inaccessibility of many areas. Routine immunisation is very weak and measles outbreaks have been confirmed in 12 counties since January 2016. The European Commission funds field hospitals, as well as health and feeding centres.



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### Water and sanitation

Before the conflict, limited access to clean water and sanitation services was already a major cause of illness and deaths. With people uprooted from their homes, living either in the bush or in overcrowded camps, providing safe water has become an even bigger challenge. By supporting emergency preparedness and response activities, the European Commission ensures that drinking water and sanitation facilities are available in order to reduce water-borne diseases such as cholera.



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### Food assistance

To address food insecurity in South Sudan, the European Commission supports the UN World Food Programme (WFP) in providing life-saving assistance to the internally displaced. In the first three months of 2016, WFP delivered more than 97 000 metric tons of food, sufficient for a full ration for nearly 1 million people. Children, pregnant and breastfeeding mothers were also given supplementary feeding to prevent them from becoming malnourished. WFP, with European Commission support, is exploring the feasibility to expand cash based assistance in urban areas where markets exist.



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### Education in Emergencies

Under the EU Education in Emergencies initiative, the European Commission is providing €4.2 million to six relief agencies in their efforts to provide education and protection for children aged five to 17. Particular attention is given to those who have been deprived of education due to conflict and displacement.



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