European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

South Sudan

Introduction

More than 7 million South Sudanese need urgent humanitarian assistance. A high number of them face severe food shortages, and undernutrition has reached critical levels. With an uncertain and volatile political scene, the man-made crisis in South Sudan has far-reaching consequences for its neighbours. More than 2 million South Sudanese have fled across borders. The EU is a long-standing donor of impartial humanitarian aid to the people in need in South Sudan.

What are the needs?

Years of conflict and economic collapse have caused mass displacement among civilians. Widespread destruction has ruined livelihoods and trade. More than half of the population requires emergency food assistance. In 2019, nearly 1.7 million people – including young children, pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers – are at risk of acute malnourishment. Six million people need help accessing safe water and hygiene.

The national health system is weakened by years of conflict and is ill-prepared to manage disease outbreaks. The first quarter of 2019 saw a significant rise in measles outbreaks, and malaria is on the rise. There is concern that the Ebola epidemic could spread across borders into South Sudan from neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo. The healthcare system needs support to provide basic quality services, increase immunisation coverage, and better prepare for outbreaks. With more than 2 million children deprived of education, South Sudan has one of the highest proportions of out-of-school children in the world.

The crisis in the country is characterised by serious violations and abuses against civilians. These include sexual violence and child recruitment into armed forces. The conflict has triggered a mass exodus to Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Sudan. One third of the South Sudanese population continues to live in displacement, either as refugees or in other parts of the country itself.
How are we helping?

In 2019, the European Union has allocated €49.5 million in support of humanitarian action in South Sudan. In 2018, it also provided €47.3 million to help South Sudanese refugees in neighbouring countries. Since 2014, the EU has contributed more than €551 million in aid in South Sudan. Protection of children and women is a priority for the EU given the extreme levels of violence and the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war. In 2018, EU’s humanitarian partners were able to secure the release of almost 1,000 children from the ranks of armed groups.

The EU also supports emergency teams that have the flexibility to act quickly and respond to new crises in different parts of the country. These teams provide people with shelter, food assistance, protection services, healthcare, water and sanitation, essential household items and education. Of the nearly 2 million internally displaced people, more than 180,000 live in sites next to UN peacekeeping bases, in so-called protection of civilian sites. The EU supports agencies for the provision of basic services, shelter and protection in these camps.

With emergency levels of malnutrition across the country, the EU is helping to expand food assistance and nutrition interventions in hard-to-reach areas, particularly in the Jonglei, Upper Nile, and Equatoria regions. EU humanitarian funds support the acquisition and distribution of nutrition products including ready-to-use therapeutic foods for the treatment of malnourished children and mothers.

Since 2018, the EU is also contributing to actions in South Sudan aimed at the strengthening of Ebola prevention and preparedness actions in the country. In 2019, the EU has contributed more than €1 million in support of such measures.

More than 115 aid workers have been killed since the start of the civil war in 2013 and insecurity continues to hamper access to people in need. The EU has repeatedly called on all parties to grant unhindered, safe and sustained access for humanitarians to all parts of the country and to eliminate impediments to aid.

More than 2 million South Sudanese have fled to neighbouring countries. The EU helps refugees with food assistance, shelter, health and nutritional care, psychosocial assistance, and education. About half of all South Sudanese refugees are below the age of eighteen and many are unaccompanied (without parents or not under the care of an adult). The EU funds specific programmes aimed at better protecting minors, those at risk of sexual and gender-based violence, and other vulnerable people.