European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

South Sudan

Introduction

Around 7.5 million South Sudanese need urgent humanitarian assistance, many of whom face severe food shortages, and undernutrition is at critical levels. There are over 2 million South Sudanese refugees in neighbouring countries. The EU is a long-standing donor of humanitarian aid in the country and continues to support humanitarian projects helping South Sudanese refugees in the region.

What are the needs?

Since 2013, conflict in South Sudan have caused mass displacement among civilians. While the security situation improved in 2019, it remains volatile and conflict and intercommunal violence are still present in some areas. This volatility continues to drive people away from their homes, and disrupts livelihood activities. On top of this, unpredictable rainfall patterns exacerbate the availability of food.

5.5 million people are at risk of severe food shortages and up to 1.8 million children, pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers are at risk of acute malnourishment. 5.5 million people lack access to safe water and hygiene.

The national health system is ill-prepared to manage disease outbreaks. 2019 saw a significant rise in measles outbreaks, and above-normal seasonal malaria levels. There is concern that the Ebola epidemic could spread across borders into South Sudan from neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo. Around a third of the schools have been closed, damaged or destroyed. 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 South Sudan is characterised by serious violations and abuses against civilians. 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 allocated €51.6 million in support of humanitarian action in South Sudan, including funding given to help communities hit by the heavy rains and floods in late 2019. With emergency levels of food insecurity and malnutrition across the country, the EU provides food assistance and nutrition interventions, including in hard-to-reach areas. 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.

EU-funded projects also provide protection support to displaced people and people who are carrying the scars of war trauma and violence, including children. Specific actions are focused on reintegrating children who were previously recruited as child soldiers. 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.

The EU 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 for out-of-school children.

Since 2018, the EU has also contributed to actions in South Sudan that strengthen Ebola prevention and preparedness actions in the country. Through its development aid, the EU also helps to strengthen the national health system.

More than 115 aid workers have been killed in South Sudan since the start of the civil war in 2013. While humanitarian access to people in need has improved in 2019 compared to previous years, aid workers’ security remains a major concern. The EU continues to call for the protection of humanitarian workers and for their safe and sustained access to all parts of the country.

More than 2 million South Sudanese remain in neighbouring countries as refugees. They are helped with food assistance, shelter, health and nutritional care, psychosocial assistance, and education. About half of all South Sudanese refugees are below the age of 18 and many are unaccompanied (without parents or not under the care of an adult). The EU funds specific programmes that protect minors, those at risk of sexual and gender-based violence, and other vulnerable people.