European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

South Sudan

Introduction

A new peace deal signed in September 2018 has curbed fighting and brings hope of an end to the five-year civil war that ravaged South Sudan. Meanwhile, the security situation remains volatile and seven million people still need urgent humanitarian assistance. More than six million people face severe food shortages. This man-made crisis has wide-reaching consequences for neighbouring countries where 2.2 million South Sudanese have taken refuge.

What are the needs?

Years of conflict and economic collapse have caused mass displacement and immeasurable distress among the civilian population. Widespread destruction has ruined livelihoods and local trade, leaving nearly 6 out of 10 people suffer from severe food shortages. Healthcare and education are in tatters with an estimated 80 percent of South Sudan's counties lacking adequate health services. This is especially worrying given the growing Ebola outbreak in neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Preparedness measures need to be stepped up as there is a considerable risk of Ebola spreading across borders.

Due to displacement and extensive damage to water and sanitation facilities, 5.6 million people urgently need access to safe water. In 2019, 600 000 pregnant and breastfeeding women are at risk of acute malnourishment on top of the nearly one million children who suffer from the condition. Up to 2.4 million South Sudanese children are deprived of education, one of the highest proportions of out-of-school children in the world. Thousands of South Sudanese children are either missing or separated from their parents. South Sudan's crisis is characterised by serious violations and abuses against civilians, including widespread sexual and gender-based violence and forced child recruitment. The conflict has triggered a mass exodus to Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Sudan. One-third of the South Sudanese population live uprooted from their homes, as refugees or internally displaced people.
How are we helping?

In 2018, the European Union allocated €92.3 million in humanitarian aid to partners in South Sudan and in neighbouring countries. Since the beginning of 2017, the EU has provided more than €317 million to help millions of South Sudanese affected by conflict: €127 million for live-saving assistance in South Sudan and €190 million for the regional refugee response.

Protection of children, girls, and women is a priority for the EU given the extreme violence and 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 prioritises support to 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 and assistance, healthcare, water and sanitation, essential household items and education. Of the 1.9 million internally displaced people, about 190,000 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. Humanitarian funding from the EU supports the nutrition pipeline for the countrywide response and centres where children and mothers receive treatment and care. At the end of 2018, the EU allocated €50,000 to support efforts to prevent the transmission of Ebola into South Sudan and help the country prepare for a possible outbreak.

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.

Almost 2.2 million South Sudanese have fled to neighbouring countries. The EU helps refugees with food assistance, shelter, health and nutrition 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 person). The EU funds specific protection programmes for these minors and for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence.