

South Sudan Crisis (Dec 2013- Jan 2014)

Background paper

8.1.2014

Brief historical context

Two prolonged periods of conflict took place between 1955-1972 and 1983-2005 in which approximately 2.5 million people died¹ - mostly civilians - due to violence, starvation and drought. In 2005 these periods of violent conflict resulted in a series of peace talks, which finally resulted in a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

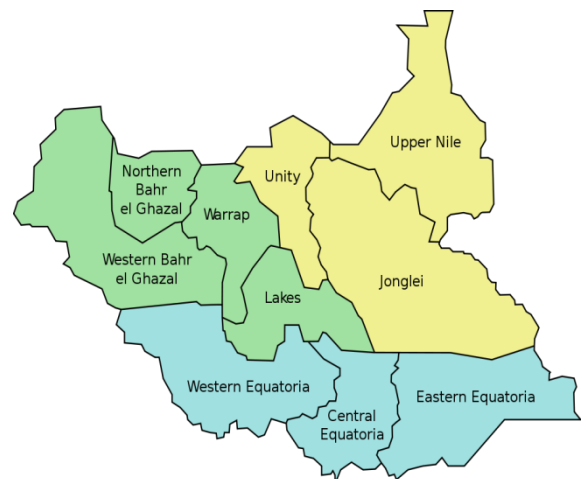
As part of this CPA, the Sudanese government in Khartoum agreed to grant the south a six-year period of autonomy, followed by a referendum- allowing the people to decide if they were to secede from the large Sudanese state. The result of this referendum, held in January 2011, was a vote of 98% in favour of secession. Independence of the Southern Sudanese state was realized on 9 July 2011.

Since independence, South Sudan has been in an intensive national building exercise, under the close monitoring by the international community, UN, international financial organizations, NGOs as well as the civilian population. South Sudan had a massive undertaking needing to both reconcile a population most of whom had lived their entire lives in war- or a on the verge of conflict, as well as to negotiate a fair distribution of resources with their former government to their north – causing oil production to be shut down from January 2012. Subsequently, South Sudan has struggled to effectively build its governmental infrastructure while also attempting to control rebel militia groups operating in its territory. Due to the aforementioned obstacles, the country's economic situation remains dire.

Re-Emerging Violence since December 2013

According to UNOCHA violence began around the 15 December 2013. As of the 7 January 2014, the estimated number of people displaced since the outbreak of violence is over 200,000 and the estimated number of deaths exceeds 1000. Many have sought refuge at UN bases or have successfully crossed into neighbouring countries- particularly, Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia.² To date, the violence has affected five out of the ten states of the South Sudan namely, Central Equatoria, Jonglei, Unity, Lakes and Upper Nile.

Ceasefire talks continue with South Sudanese governmental representatives and various leaders of



¹ <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/od.html>

² Map is public domain: <http://www.worldofmaps.net/en/africa/map-south-sudan/map-states-south-sudan.htm>

non-state parties in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Additionally, representative of both Sudan and South Sudan are in discussions regarding possible joint military action in the boarder regions, particularly in the oil fields, which are vulnerable to attack potentially causing great economic losses.³

Churches in South Sudan and internationally, have spoken strongly for peace. They have also emphasised that the conflict is of political nature and it should not be portrayed as an ethnic conflict.⁴ Churches globally have joined the call of the churches for peace.⁵

Due to the escalating violence, evacuation protocol measures have been implemented by many organizations. Operations have been able to continue in some areas within the country, where the security situation has allowed it. Work has also continued from neighboring countries where coordinated efforts to provide shelter and essential services are being made when possible. The escalating security situation makes this a daunting task, and many remain in great need of aid.

ACT Alliance Efforts

ACT Alliance is scaling up its relief operations and has launched four emergency appeals to address the humanitarian need in the region⁶. The appeals are preliminary and the response will be scaled up based on the developments and need.

In South Sudan with a US\$ 2,8 milion appeal ACT members Norwegian Church Aid, World Renew and Dan Church Aid help internally displaced persons and host communities to have access to essential life-saving items, reduce vulnerability and for them to realize safety and human dignity.

To address the influx of refugees within the region the ACT forums in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda are engaged in refugee response.

In Ethiopia through a US\$ 2,3 million appeal ACT members Lutheran World Federation and EOC-DICAC/IOCC are preparing to provide support in Lietchor, Tongo, Okugo and Pugnido refugee camps in the areas of water and sanitation, psycho-social support, food and non-food items, health and livelihoods. In Kenya a US\$1,3 million appeal will focus on the Kakuma refugee camp where ACT members Lutheran World Federation and the National Council of Churches of Kenya are preparing to support reception facilities, water and sanitation equipment, child protection, camp planning and emergency education. In Uganda a US\$ 488,407 appeal will assist ACT member Lutheran World Federation in its response for refugees in the West Nile Region and Northwest Uganda regarding water, sanitation, refugee and host communities support and psychosocial support.

ACT Alliance has continuously called for a political resolution, protection of civilians and the immediate improvement of security situation to allow for a proper response to the humanitarian need.

³ UNOCHA "South Sudan Crisis": Situation report numbers 7 and 8, published on 1 and 7 January 2014.
<http://www.unocha.org/south-sudan/>

⁴ <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/general-secretary/letters-received/south-sudan-church-leaders-letter>

⁵ <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/wcc-calls-for-a-201cmandela-moment201d-in-south-sudan>

⁶ <http://www.actalliance.org/resources/appeals>