

Suffering will worsen accross South Sudan without adequate humanitarian support



Photo: Jeremiah Young

World Vision South Sudan
Policy Brief

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Overview:

The recent escalation of violence in Juba was a significant setback to the provision of basic needs for children and their families across South Sudan. But even though many of the displaced in Juba have returned, the vulnerabilities of all South Sudanese are increasing.

South Sudan was already facing wide-spread food insecurity and malnutrition with a risk of famine growing in several parts of the country. According to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC)¹ for the Republic of South Sudan released on 29 June 2016, the overall food security and nutrition situation has continued to worsen resulting in over 4.8 million individuals experiencing *acute* levels of hunger and malnutrition.² This is an increase of one million individuals overall and a 40 percent increase in number of children treated for severe malnutrition since the same period last year. Moreover, the report also noted that over 300,000 of these individuals were increasingly being found in urban areas such as Juba, Wau, and Aweil, with the trend likely to deteriorate rapidly if the security and economic environment were to continue to worsen.

Children who suffer from moderate acute malnutrition are 2.5 times more likely to die than a well-nourished child if they don't receive treatment. If the malnutrition is severe, a child is 9 times more likely to die. Ensuring good nutrition, particularly in the first 1,000 days of a child's life saves lives and prevents the lifelong impacts of mental and physical stunting caused by malnutrition. Rapid needs assessments carried out by World Vision in response to the recent violence in Juba indicated that hunger and malnutrition among children under 5 has indeed deteriorated, with GAM rates well above emergency thresholds.

Despite the widespread violence that broke out in Juba on eve of South Sudan's 5th anniversary of independence and the uncertainty that it has brought, World Vision and other humanitarian actors such as WFP and UNICEF have continued to provide life-saving assistance to vulnerable children and families in Juba and across the country. However, additional support is required from all stakeholders to support our efforts and contribute to a more peaceful environment from which individuals and communities can build trust and reconciliation in South Sudan.

Recommendations: UN Security Council

While recognizing the numerous interrelated factors contributing to the current situation, the international community should not allow the suffering of millions of South Sudanese to worsen. It is critical that stakeholders recognize that a fully supported urban response in Juba will only succeed to the extent that the international community does not lose focus on the full range of vulnerable people that exist throughout South Sudan. World Vision calls on the international community to respond to the unprecedented needs of the children, families, and communities affected by the recent violence, insecurity, and economic hardship in South Sudan by contributing to the following:

1. Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, or IPC, describes acute food insecurity at the household and area level. At the household level, Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) is described as: "Even with any humanitarian assistance, household group has an extreme lack of food and/or other basic needs even with full employment of coping strategies."

2The most recent IPC analysis was drafted in April 2016, and originally recorded 4.3 million individuals living in IPC Phases 3, 4, & 5, with the expectation that the number would rise to 4.8 by July if no additional support was provided.



- 1. Ensure that urgent and unimpeded humanitarian access is granted to non-governmental organizations (NGO) and UN agencies responding to the needs of the people of South Sudan.** The UN Security Council and other stakeholders must urge the Transitional Government of National Unity (TGNU) to work closely with humanitarians to facilitate access to the millions suffering from severe hunger and malnutrition across the country. Interventions carried out by World Vision and others improve immediate and longer-term food and nutrition outcomes in the country.
- 2. Urge all parties to the conflict to work closer together to build trust between themselves and communities to reduce insecurity and facilitate economic recovery.** Individuals and communities in South Sudan remained hopeful that the formation of the TGNU would result in lasting peace. Therefore, without a cessation of the renewed conflict, desperation, frustration, and grievance could result in ordinary citizens taking to extreme coping mechanisms like violence and looting in order to survive.
- 3. Urge all parties to the conflict to allow the free movement of all civilians.** As witnessed by World Vision and partners, the restriction of civilian movement has resulted in tens of thousands being unable to reach locations for shelter and lifesaving humanitarian interventions. Those who were already suffering from hunger and malnutrition are now even more vulnerable and require additional humanitarian assistance to survive.
- 4. Work with neighboring countries to reopen trade routes into South Sudan to improve food security and serve as a point of connection to build peace among otherwise competing communities.** Because South Sudan is almost entirely dependent on imports, restrictions on trade will result in continued suffering and limit the prospects of economic recovery. This is particularly evident in the Greater Bahr el Ghazal region bordering Sudan where the current economic, environmental, and political conditions are similar to those felt leading up to the Bahr el Ghazal famine of 1998. As a result of this most recent violence, we are now witnessing similar trends elsewhere, particularly those areas bordering Uganda, Kenya, and Ethiopia.
- 5. Ensure UNMISS prioritizes the protection of civilians, humanitarian staff, and assets.** This includes the allocation of the necessary support to protect humanitarian warehouses from further incidents of looting and any relocation of civilians currently seeking protection in the UNMISS compounds such as in the Tongping area of Juba. It must also be carried out with dignity and in full coordination with humanitarian actors.
- 6. Work with UNMISS to develop a contingency plan to secure key transportation routes to locations such as the airport for the movement of humanitarian staff, either seeking evacuation or accessing remote locations for implementation.** A higher priority must also be placed on securing the general freedom of movement for all humanitarians and assets in the event of another spike in hostilities.
- 7. Urge UNMISS to allow for the registration of all new arrivals at the Juba PoC.** This is in addition to those civilians preparing to be transported to other locations such as those currently sheltering in the UNMISS compound in Tongping. Without registration, it is difficult for the humanitarian community to adequately support this new influx of individuals and if not supported sufficiently the humanitarian community and those displaced will face an unnecessary security risk as a result.

Recommendations: Donors

8. Ensure full funding of the South Sudan Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for 2016 in support of on-going operations and the need to scale-up interventions due to the recent violence. Currently, only 39 % of the 2016 HRP has been funded. If this shortfall is not addressed immediately, any gains made by past interventions could be erased and worsening insecurity will spread to previously more stable areas of the country. Donors must also urgently provide support and funding for the restocking of supplies recently looted in Juba in order to meet the acute needs of an urban/peri-urban response in Juba, and also support food and nutrition needs across the country.

9. Recognize the impact the conflict in South Sudan is having on neighboring countries in the region. The number of refugees flowing into countries like Uganda and Kenya must also be adequately supported so that when they are able to return can fully contribute to a healthy and productive South Sudan.

10. Support policies and interventions that encourage local communities to develop livelihoods and carry out crop cultivation during the next growing season. South Sudan has enormous potential to be a major food producer not only for its own population, but the region. In doing so, both the process and outcome would contribute to building both the adaptive and risk reductive capabilities of individuals and communities in South Sudan. This includes working with faith leaders and other traditional mechanisms to build peace and cohesion between and within communities so that they are less reliant on humanitarian assistance and more resilient to both natural and manmade shocks and stresses in the future.

11. Recognize the importance of interventions such as Child Protection and education in emergencies. Children bear the greatest burden due to the affects of war and conflict. When not adequately supported with measures to protect them, both physically and mentally, the trauma they experience will impact their ability to support healthy and productive communities in the future.

“Despite experiencing decades of brutal conflict, the people of South Sudan remain remarkably resilient. World Vision is confident that if peace comes and the people are provided with the necessary support, they will build a stronger and more resilient South Sudan in the future.”

–Perry Mansfield, National Director, World Vision South Sudan



World Vision in South Sudan

Since 2015, World Vision has reached over 1.3 million South Sudanese, of which over 630,000 are children. Those who have benefited from World Vision's WASH, NFI, Protection, and Education interventions, include more than 95,000 individuals reached with food security and livelihoods programming; over 280,000 with food assistance; and 64,200 pregnant and lactating mothers who received nutrition assistance, screenings, and outpatient care.



A young boy displaced by recent fighting in Juba waits for nutrition screening and treatment at the UNMISS compound in Tongping. July 16, 2016. Photo: Jeremiah Young

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