

**Violent clashes in South Sudan intensify the humanitarian situation***The humanitarian community calls for immediate cessation of hostilities*

**(Juba, 29 December 2022)** An estimated 30,000 people have been reportedly displaced following recent violent clashes by armed elements in the Greater Pibor Administrative Area. On 24 December, armed young men from Jonglei State attacked communities in parts of the Greater Pibor Administrative Area. The violence has led to cattle raiding, destruction of properties, and displacement of thousands of people. Some 5,000 internally displaced people, including women and children, have arrived in Pibor town after fleeing the conflict areas of Gumuruk and Lekuangle. “People have suffered enough. Civilians – especially those most vulnerable – women, children, the elderly and the disabled – bear the brunt of this prolonged crisis”, said Ms. Sara Beysolow Nyanti, Humanitarian Coordinator for South Sudan.

Humanitarian partners are providing much needed assistance to those affected by the violence. The recent violent outbreak follows another massive displacement of civilians which was triggered by fighting mid-November 2022 in Fashoda County, Upper Nile State. The UN response to this crisis is ongoing and during a mission to Malakal, Upper Nile State to access the ongoing humanitarian operations, Ms. Hamida R. Lasseko, UNICEF Representative in South Sudan expressed her grave concern, noting that “the escalation of violence in areas across the country has left some vulnerable people fleeing for safety in various directions in desperate need of support.” The ongoing fighting has had an adverse impact on the overstretched humanitarian operations in South Sudan opening new gaps. “This puts additional strain on the humanitarian response and resources. We are forced to prioritize immediate lifesaving needs of the newly displaced population”, Ms. Lasseko added.

Vulnerable people in South Sudan continue to suffer the cumulative and compounding effects of years of social and political instability, food insecurity, and climate-related shocks such as flooding. The ongoing conflict, including violence at the sub-national level, has impacted thousands of people in 2022, leading to multiple displacements, loss of lives and livelihoods. This has also exacerbated people’s chronic vulnerabilities and mounting needs for life-saving humanitarian assistance and protection. “The violence must stop. The whole humanitarian community calls upon all armed elements to immediately cease hostilities, respect international humanitarian law and protect civilians and humanitarian workers,” said Ms. Nyanti. “Impunity is a perpetuating factor and root cause for conflict and insecurity. There must be accountability,” she stressed.

In 2023, a projected 9.4 million people will need humanitarian assistance and protection, and an estimated 2.8 million people are expected to face physical violence including, rape, and other forms of gender-based violence and will need protection assistance. Protracted displacement has affected over 2.2 million people unable to return to their homes. “I am deeply concerned about the continuous deterioration of people’s physical and mental well-being, living standards and coping mechanisms,” said Ms. Nyanti. “Peace is the prerequisite for people to rebuild their lives,” she added.

Note to editors:

*Estimated 9.4 million of the most vulnerable people in South Sudan will need urgent life-saving assistance and protection in 2023, compared to 8.9 million in 2022. In 2023, humanitarian partners target 6.8 million people with urgent life-saving support and protection services. As of 28 December, the 2022 Humanitarian Response Plan was funded at 67.4 per cent. South Sudan continues to be the most violent context for aid workers, followed by Afghanistan and Syria. Since the beginning of 2022, nine humanitarian workers were killed in the line of duty in South Sudan. Across the country, aid workers – mostly national humanitarian workers – are affected by the impact of armed violence, bureaucratic impediments, and targeted violence.*

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