

# UN in South Sudan concerned about civilians fleeing Government, rebel fighting in Upper Nile

12 July 2017 – Thousands of South Sudanese civilians are fleeing to neighbouring Ethiopia as Government troops advance on a rebel stronghold in the Upper Nile region, a senior United Nations official today said, expressing grave concern about what is already the world's fastest growing refugee crisis.

Reports from the UN International Organization on Migration ([IOM](#)) "suggest that Government forces are now approaching the town of Maiwut, 25 kilometres north-west of Pagak. I'm [gravely concerned](#) by this ongoing situation," the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in South Sudan, David Shearer, told reporters from Juba, the capital.

He added that while it is unclear which side began the fighting, the military advance by the South Sudan forces "is not in the spirit of the unilateral ceasefire" declared by the Government in May.

Mr. Shearer said there has been "active military engagement" over the past week north of Pagak, and at least 25 aid workers have relocated in the area as a result of the insecurity.

The senior UN official, who is also the head of the UN Mission in the country, or UNMISS, also voiced great concern about an orphanage near Torit, south of Juba, surrounded by Government and rebel fighters who are preparing to fight.

"It's unacceptable that 250 innocent children, and the people who care for them, find themselves in no-man's land between the warring parties," Mr. Shearer stressed.

RELATED: [South Sudan: UN, partners seek \\$1.4 billion for 'world's fastest growing refugee crisis'](#)

Requests by UNMISS to access the Hope for South Sudan Orphanage have been denied "locally, on the ground."

The Government forces central command in Juba yesterday gave UNMISS "the go-ahead to send peacekeepers to the orphanage. I'm hopeful that will happen today," he added.

Mr. Shearer urged both sides to reflect on President Salva Kiir's Independence Day message of peace and withdraw from the facility.

In addition to accessing the orphanage, a group of Nepalese peacekeepers have been sent to protect civilians and the UN base in Torit.

“The number of patrols we can undertake in the town will increase with the additional peacekeepers. In turn, that should provide more security and boost confidence,” said Mr. Shearer.

He noted that his deputy, Moustapha Soumaré, is travelling to Torit tomorrow and will report back.

---

## [Billions around the world lack safe water, proper sanitation facilities, reveals UN report](#)

12 July 2017 – Some three in ten people around the world lack access to safe and readily available water at home, and almost six in ten to safely managed sanitation, a new United Nations report has warned, calling on countries to do more to fulfil these basic human needs.

According to the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) and the UN Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)) joint report, [Progress on Drinking Water, Sanitation and Hygiene: 2017 Update and Sustainable Development Goal Baselines](#), many homes, healthcare facilities and schools also lack soap and water for handwashing, putting the health of all people – but especially young children – at risk for deadly diseases.

“Safe water, sanitation and hygiene at home should not be a privilege of only those who are rich or live in urban centres,” Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the WHO Director-General, said in a news release, announcing the findings and noting that those living in rural areas are the worst affected.

As a result of lack of these basic services, millions fall ill to diseases that could, otherwise, have been easily prevented – such as diarrhoea which claims the lives of 361,000 children under the age of five die, every year, noted the UN agencies.

“Safe water, effective sanitation and hygiene are critical to the health of every child and every community – and thus are essential to building stronger, healthier, and more equitable societies,” underscored Anthony Lake, the Executive Director of UNICEF.

***‘Significant’ inequalities persist***

Safe water, sanitation and hygiene at home should not be a privilege of only those who are rich WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus

Good hygiene is one of the simplest and most effective ways to prevent the spread of diseases such as diarrhoea, cholera, dysentery, hepatitis A, and typhoid.

However, findings in the report revealed that access to water and soap for handwashing varies immensely in the 70 countries with available data, from 15 per cent of the population in sub-Saharan Africa to 76 per cent in western Asia and northern Africa.

These significant inequalities also put the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)), in particular [Goal 6](#) on ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all at risk.

Backed by the data, the two UN agencies also warned that in as many as 90 countries around the world, progress towards basic sanitation is too slow, meaning they will not reach universal coverage by 2030.

***In addition, hundreds of millions without even 'basic' drinking water***

According to the report, of the 2.1 billion people who do not have safely managed water, 844 million do not have even a basic drinking water service.

This includes 263 million people who have to spend over 30 minutes per trip collecting water from sources outside the home, and 159 million who still drink untreated water from surface water sources, such as streams or lakes.

As we improve these services in the most disadvantaged communities and for the most disadvantaged children today, we give them a fairer chance at a better tomorrow. UNICEF Executive Director Anthony Lake

Furthermore, of the 4.5 billion people who do not have safely managed sanitation, 2.3 billion still do not have basic sanitation services, including nearly 600 million people who share a toilet or latrine with other households, and 892 million people — mostly in rural areas — who defecate in the open.

Improvements to these services, are therefore essential not only for realizing the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development and giving the most vulnerable a chance at a better future.

As we improve these services in the most disadvantaged communities and for the most disadvantaged children today, we give them a fairer chance at a better tomorrow, said Mr. Lake.

In the same vein, Mr. Ghebreyesus underscored: These are some of the most basic requirements for human health, and all countries have a responsibility to ensure that everyone can access them.

---

# Eleven global banks partner with UN to make financial markets more climate transparent

11 July 2017 – Representing over \$7 trillion, eleven major financial institutions around the globe have joined forces with the United Nations to promote climate transparency in financial markets, the Organization's environment wing said today.

According to a news release by the UN Environment Programme ([UNEP](#)), ANZ, Barclays, Bradesco, Citi, Itaú, National Australia Bank, Royal Bank of Canada, Santander, Standard Chartered, TD Bank Group, and UBS have jointly committed to develop analytical tools and indicators to strengthen assessments and disclosures of climate-related risks and opportunities.

"The message from financial heavyweights is clear – [climate change poses a real and serious threat to our economy](#)," said Erik Solheim, the Executive Director of UNEP, in the release.

"At the same time, there are enormous business opportunities in taking climate action. Transparency on how financial institutions mitigate the risks and seize the opportunities of a two degrees pathway is crucial to move international markets towards actively supporting a low-carbon and climate-resilient future," he added.

In the news release, UNEP noted that increasing the amount of reliable information on financial institutions' exposure to climate-related risks and opportunities would also strengthen the stability of the financial system and help boost climate-friendly investments.

The partnership between the institutions and the UNEP Finance Initiative follows the recommendations by the Financial Stability Board (FSB)'s Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures (TCFD).

The Task Force was mandated by the Board to develop voluntary, consistent climate-related financial risk disclosures for use by companies, investors, lenders and insurers. Its final recommendations were published in June and submitted to the G20 last week.

It is anticipated that results from the undertaking will encourage banks worldwide to adopt such climate-focused efforts.

"After the G20, the issue now is about implementation: how can the finance industry put the framework into practice and deliver disclosure that is meaningful? Through this and other industry-led working groups UNEP FI is helping the finance sector to do just that: move from awareness to action." said Christian Thimann, Group Head of Strategy, Sustainability and Public Affairs at the AXA Group, Co-Chair of UNEP Finance Initiative and TCFD Vice-

Chair.

---

## [UN aid officials in Yemen forced to shift resources from fighting hunger to cholera](#)

11 July 2017 – Unless the international community contributes \$200 million to address the cholera outbreak in Yemen, the United Nations humanitarian arm will be forced to “reprogram” more resources tagged for malnutrition in the country already facing famine, a senior official today said.

“This unprecedented cholera epidemic would further weaken the resources, and the resilience that people had had over the last two and a half years of this war,” Jamie McGoldrick, the Humanitarian Coordinator for Yemen, told journalists in Geneva.

There were now 313,538 suspected cases of cholera and 1,732 deaths, according to figures from the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)).

About 40 per cent of the suspected cases and a quarter of the deaths were among children younger than 15 years old, particularly the malnourished. Older adults, pregnant women and people with chronic health conditions were among the greatest risk for death.

“All of this is entirely man-made, as a result of the conflict,” Mr. McGoldrick said by phone from Amman, Jordan.

He noted that two million additional people were added to the humanitarian case load since the start of the year as a result of the cholera outbreak, the looming famine, and the economic collapse.

Humanitarians were not as far ahead as they should be in terms of the cholera response, he noted, mainly due to the fact that they did not have enough resources to expand their operations into areas where health workers were working without pay.

“The actual system is in complete collapse,” he said.

The UN has received only one-third of the \$2.1 billion it sought to provide food to the millions people facing famine in Yemen; separately, a \$250 million funding appeal on cholera received only \$47 million.

“Agencies have had to use resources which they had programmed otherwise, for example for food security or malnutrition,” said Mr. McGoldrick.

## *UN agency considers “shelving” cholera vaccine in Yemen*

Meanwhile, the UN World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) is considering not shipping vaccines tagged for Yemen.

“A vaccination way ahead of an outbreak would be useful, but that would imply a huge amount of vaccines, taking into account all the countries where cholera was endemic,” Christian Lindmeier, WHO spokesperson, told journalists.

---

## [Asia-Pacific moving in ‘wrong direction’ on some development targets, notes UN regional report](#)

11 July 2017 – Despite an impressive track record, the Asia-Pacific region will need to scale up development efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) by 2030, the target envisioned, the United Nations development arm for the region has said.

“The region is making progress towards achieving the Goals on poverty, education, economic growth, industry and infrastructure, and life below water,” Shamshad Akhtar, the Executive Secretary of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific ([ESCAP](#)), launching a report assessing regional development since 2000.

“[But] [progress \[has been slow\] towards](#) achieving food security, agricultural sustainability, good health and well-being for all, and gender equality,” she added.

The [Asia-Pacific SDGs](#) Baseline report, the first regional measurement methodology of its kind, was launched at the side lines of the ongoing 2017 session of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, at the UN Headquarters, in New York.

The report has established a “baseline” for the SDGs through the assessment of regional progress since the turn of the millennium and has identified development gaps still need to be addressed to achieve the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development.

One of the key aspects highlighted by the report is that the region is moving in the “wrong direction” in terms of the targets related to on reducing inequalities, sustainable cities and communities, and ensuring responsible consumption and production.

“[This] trend must be reversed to achieve the Goals by 2030,” underscored

ESCAP.

Furthermore, the report also noted the areas where data is insufficient or not available to accurately measure progress, such as in areas such as those to analyze the level of inequality.

“Data scarcity is a major challenge,” noted Ms. Akhtar in her foreword to the report, highlighting the need for a more integrated and inclusive approach for generating statistics.

“Addressing systemic data and statistics gaps for monitoring the SDGs will only be possible if resources are mobilized in a targeted and sustainable way to support the implementation of national strategies for statistical development,” she added.