

Clashes in north-eastern South Sudan halt UN migration agency's humanitarian work

31 January 2017 – Thousands of people in need of aid in South Sudan's Upper Nile area will have to wait indefinitely, after fighting forced the United Nations migration agency to suspend humanitarian activities in the area.

“Violence in Upper Nile has once again hindered the ability of IOM and other relief agencies to provide assistance to populations seriously in need,” said the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) South Sudan Chief of Mission, William Barriga. “Civilians will undoubtedly suffer as sporadic fighting makes it more difficult for aid workers to deliver services.”

In addition to aid, the agency was in the process of registering people to receive supplies, when clashes between the Government and opposition forces forced everyone to evacuate. An estimated 2,000 to 3,000 people remained in line when the team was forced to flee.

According to IOM, clashes reached Wau Shilluk on 27 January, just as a 14-person team from the UN agency was about to resume registration. A partner organization, which provides aid, was with UN agency at the time.

Wau Shilluk is located north-eastern South Sudan, across the White Nile River from Malakal town. Malakal was one of South Sudan's largest urban areas before the current crisis and home to more than 33,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) who are sheltering at the protection of civilians (PoC) site, said IOM.

The UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) yesterday condemned the latest fighting and urged all parties to protect civilians.

UNICEF launches \$3.3 billion appeal to assist millions of children affected by conflict, disasters

31 January 2017 – Against the backdrop of ever increasing number of children driven from their homes due to conflict, disasters and climate change, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) today launched a \$3.3 billion appeal to provide emergency assistance in 48 countries around the globe.

“From Syria to Yemen and Iraq, from South Sudan to Nigeria, children are under direct attack, their homes, schools and communities in ruins, their hopes and futures hanging in the balance,” noted the UN agency in a news release today.

“In total, almost one in four of the world’s children lives in a country affected by conflict or disaster,” it added.

UNICEF’s Humanitarian Action for Children sets out the agency’s 2017 appeal and its goals to provide children with access to safe water, nutrition, education, health and protection in some of the world’s worst conflicts and humanitarian emergencies.

The largest single component of the appeal (\$1.4 billion) is for children and families caught up in the conflict in Syria, which will soon enter its seventh year. This also includes Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries, such as Jordan where, according to estimates, almost half of all refugee families have a child who is a breadwinner.

With enough funding, UNICEF hopes to reach 81 million people, including 48 million children with access to safe water, nutrition, education, health and protection.



A 28-month-old child, who has been receiving treatment for malnutrition, having her mid-upper-arm circumference measured by a health worker at a health post in Ethiopia. (file) Photo: UNICEF/Ayene

‘Silent threat’ of malnutrition

UNICEF is particularly concerned about another slow-burning threat – malnutrition.

“Malnutrition is a silent threat to millions of children,” said the agency’s Director of Emergency Programmes, Manuel Fontaine, adding:

“The damage it does can be irreversible, robbing children of their mental and physical potential. In its worst form, severe malnutrition can be deadly.”

The UN agency fears that an estimated 7.5 million children will face severe acute malnutrition across the majority of appeal countries, including almost half a million each in north east Nigeria and Yemen.

The situation is further complicated due to unavailability of accurate information in parts of the Lake Chad basin due to lack of access because of continuing activities of Boko Haram militants.

In Yemen, the worst affected areas include the capital, Sana’a, where 78 per cent of children are chronically malnourished. Furthermore, many other areas have also seen growing deprivation, from Hodeida in the west to Taiz and now Aden to the south.

UNICEF's Yemen Representative, Meritzell Relano termed the situation for children in Yemen "catastrophic", with at least 10 million in need of some form of humanitarian assistance.

"Children are dying of malnutrition, that is for sure [...] under-five mortality rate has increased to the point that we estimate that at least in 2016, 10,000 more children died of preventable diseases," she said.



Children attend a class at a primary school at an IDP camp in Maiduguri, Borno State, north east Nigeria. There are nearly 2,000 children enrolled at the UNICEF supported school in the camp. Photo: UNICEF/Naftalin

Challenges great but not insurmountable

The UN agency believes that as great as these challenges are, they're not insurmountable.

Thanks to donors, UNICEF saved lives every day in 2016, providing water to 13.6 million people, protection from measles to more than nine million children, education to over six million, and treatment for severe acute malnutrition to 2.2 million, in the first ten months of the year.

AUDIO: UNICEF seeks \$3.3 billion in emergency aid

National Entrepreneurship Awards 2016 Presented By Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh

Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh presented the First National Entrepreneurship awards 2016 in New Delhi yesterday.

New ship to serve in Sansha



A new ship is seen at a dock in Sansha of south China's Hainan province, Jan. 30, 2017. The ship completed its maiden voyage on Monday from east China's Shanghai to Sansha where it will serve. The 32-meter vessel weighs 498 tonnes. It has endurance of 45 days and is able to resist gales with speed of more than 60 kilometers per hour, according to its captain Yin Minzeng. It was designed to help extinguish fires on the sea, tow vessels that lose power and assist law-enforcement vessels. In addition, it will provide supplies for islands of Sansha. (Xinhua/Dai Chao)

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Sansha City was established in 2012 to administer islets and reefs in the Xisha, Zhongsha and Nansha islet groups as well as waters in this area.

Press release: Late payment reporting guidance launched for large businesses

- guidance published ahead of measures coming into force in April 2017 to boost transparency of payment practices to help small and medium sized businesses (SMEs)
- regulations laid in parliament today will make large businesses publish details on the time taken to pay their suppliers to shine a light on bad practice
- latest figures show SMEs are owed £26.3 billion in overdue payments

Guidance to help large businesses report on how quickly they pay their suppliers will be published today (31 January 2017), as regulations are laid in parliament by Small Business Minister Margot James.

The regulations confirm that from April 2017, large companies and limited liability partnerships (LLPs) will have to publically report twice a year on their payment practices and performance, including the average time taken to pay supplier invoices.

Failure to report will be a criminal offence and the guidance published today will help large businesses and limited liability partnerships prepare for these measures coming into force.

Small Business Minister Margot James said:

The UK is home to a record 5.5 million small businesses and the industrial strategy will help address many of the challenges they face getting finance and scaling up. It's completely unacceptable that small and medium-sized businesses are owed £26.3 billion in late payments, which hampers their ability to grow and has no place in an economy that works for all.

Large businesses have an important role to play and the guidance published today will help them fulfil their responsibilities and improve payment practices across the board.

The changes are part of a package to shine a spotlight on bad payment practice and lead to improved standards. This includes the appointment of the Small Business Commissioner to support small businesses in resolving payment disputes, with the Commissioner's office expected to be up and running later in the year.

Recent findings from the payment processor Bacs report that nearly half of the UK's small-to-medium sized businesses experience late payment, with £26.3 billion owed to them in total. The regulations laid in Parliament today aim to tackle this by increasing transparency and helping small businesses make informed decisions about who they do business with.

The [modern industrial strategy green paper](#) sets out a plan to improve living standards and economic growth by increasing productivity and driving growth across the whole country. We encourage businesses of all sizes and anyone with an interest to respond.

Mike Cherry, National Chairman at the Federation of Small Businesses, said:

The new duty to report is the centrepiece of the government's transparency agenda to combat poor payment practice. We welcome this as an important tool to change a UK business culture where it is deemed acceptable to pay small firms late. We estimate that if payments were made promptly, 50,000 business deaths could be avoided every year, adding £2.5 billion to the UK economy. It's now crucial that these regulations are introduced and robustly enforced with proper sanctions put in place for any large business that tries to hide its payment practices.

There is now a clear will to tackle poor payments. Together with the new Small Business Commissioner and the developing corporate governance agenda to improve supply chain respect at board level, we must see a reduction in the £26 billion owed in late payments.

Jacqueline de Rojas, Managing Director of UK, Ireland and Northern Europe at Sage, said:

Our small business customers across the country tell us that late payment is still one of their biggest barriers to competing with larger suppliers. We know it impacts their ability to invest and innovate. And when you consider that people building these businesses create two-thirds of all new jobs, it's easy to see what a detrimental effect this could have on the financial health of the nation.

Through partnerships, advice and digital tools, we work hard to help small businesses manage cash flow challenges, and this new light-touch regulation is good news for them. This is a welcome move in the right direction to creating a stronger, fairer economy and making the UK the best place to start and run a business.