

## Press Release

### Children at risk in South Sudan violence



Credits: (Save the Children/Colin Crowley)

Save the Children is deeply concerned about the situation in South Sudan, where approximately 500,000 have been affected by escalating violence since Sunday 15 December. The civilians who have been displaced, including a large number of children, are in dire need of humanitarian assistance. We are assessing our response to the current crisis, in addition to our existing programmes. As the on-going violence in Bor and the attack on the UN compound in Akobo shows, our teams on the ground in the affected areas, including Akobo, Bor and Waat in Jonglei state, are operating in very difficult circumstances.

This outbreak of violence is a huge setback for the children of the world's newest nation. They already struggle with poor healthcare, high mortality rates, frequent food shortages and some of the worst education outcomes in the world. After decades of devastating civil conflict, a return to unrest and its associated displacement would have very serious consequences for the children's survival and development.

As a result of the current fighting, children are at increased risk of violence, abuse and separation from their families. We are the lead agency for family tracing and reunification in South Sudan and have serious concerns for the impact on children fleeing the fighting including those who have been forced to flee to the bush, out of reach of humanitarian organisations.

Save the Children's South Sudan country director, Fiona McSheehy, says: "We are extremely concerned about the fate of children in South Sudan, a young country already struggling to get on its feet after years of instability. We're calling on all

armed actors to de-escalate the situation and focus on the safety and security of innocent civilians.”

Save the Children has been working in the region of South Sudan for more than 20 years, with projects in eight out of the country’s ten states. At this stage Save the Children has not evacuated its international staff, but we will continue to monitor the situation and assess the safety of our staff both national and international. Unfortunately some of our programmes, especially in the volatile state of Jonglei, have been suspended because of the on-going violence, hampering our ability to provide children with vital health, nutrition, food security and education support.

At least 62,000 people have been displaced by the current violence, including 20,000 who are taking refuge in UN compounds in the capital and a further 15,000 in the UN compound in Bor. The provision of essential supplies by agencies on the ground to people in desperate need in Bor and other areas of Jonglei continues to be hampered by heavy fighting in the area.

#Ends#

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John Nyirenda – Deputy Director for Humanitarian Response

Notes to Editors;

- Save the Children is committed to pursuing and intensifying its efforts in providing life-saving humanitarian assistance to affected populations, as well as working with others to ensure the protection and care of children caught up in and affected by armed conflict, tension and strife.
- [Save the Children](#) is the leading independent organization for children in need, with programs in more than 120 countries, including the United States. We aim to inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children, and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives by improving their health, education and economic opportunities. In times of acute crisis, we mobilize rapid assistance to help children recover from the effects of war, conflict and natural disasters. Follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)