

SOUTH SUDAN: Humanitarian Coordinator calls for an end to attacks against civilians and aid workers on World Humanitarian Day

(Juba, 20 August 2018): In commemoration of World Humanitarian Day in South Sudan, the Humanitarian Coordinator, Alain Noudéhou, called for an end to attacks against civilians and aid workers, and the realisation of the peace deal to end the conflict, signed on the 5 August.

Mr Noudéhou said: “Ensuring the safety and security of aid workers in South Sudan has now become a major challenge that continuously hampers humanitarian action. Civilians, including humanitarians and medical workers, are not – and should never be – a target.”

For the third year in a row South Sudan is the most dangerous country in the world to be a humanitarian worker. Since the conflict began in December 2013, at least 109 aid workers have been killed. In 2018 alone, 12 workers have lost their lives. Most of them are South Sudanese. Many more are detained, harassed or threatened with impunity for the perpetrators.

Humanitarian work continues to face denials of access that make it harder than ever to operate. There have been 470 incidents reported so far this year.

In July, in Maban, Upper Nile, a demonstration turned violent brought humanitarian compounds and assets under wide scale attack; 400 staff were evacuated. In August, humanitarian access outside of Wau continued to be restricted for the second consecutive month. These incidents show a complete lack of respect for aid workers and civilians – who are consistently denied food, clean water, shelter and health services that they desperately need.

In July alone there were 22 cases of looting – an increase on the 15 incidents in July last year. In the first week of August alone, in Kapoeta East, Eastern Equatoria, there were three incidents targeting humanitarian convoys.

On the 5 of August a new agreement was reached to revitalise the peace process in South Sudan. Mr Noudéhou said: “We hope that the parties to the conflict will stay the course to stop the fighting. Sustained peace and stability is essential to allow people to go home, to plough their fields, to take care of their families and to rebuild their communities.”

In 2018, humanitarian needs have grown as the conflict continues. There are now 7 million people who are hungry – an increase on the six million people last year. Intercommunal violence, disease and displacement continue to take their toll on the population. Civilians continue to be killed or subjected to horrendous violations, including sexual violence.

“We call for enhanced respect for international humanitarian and human rights law and for all perpetrators of violence against humanitarians and civilians to be held accountable,” said Mr Noudéhou.

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