



Joint UN Press Release

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UN AGENCIES IN SUDAN REACH CONFLICT-AFFECTED COMMUNITIES IN NON-GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED AREAS FOR FIRST TIME IN A DECADE

KHARTOUM – For the first time in ten years, United Nations humanitarian agencies have been able to access conflict-affected communities in the five non-governmental areas controlled by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) El Hilu in South Kordofan and Blue Niles states of Sudan.

A series of humanitarian missions to the five isolated enclaves has concluded, just as renewed peace talks between the Government of Sudan and SPLM-N are ongoing in Juba, South Sudan. These five areas have largely been cut-off from support over the last decade and the missions' findings indicate people are in dire need of improved food security, education, health, and water and sanitation services.

"This response marks a significant breakthrough in humanitarian access and response to conflict-affected communities previously unreachable by UN humanitarian assistance. We commend the local efforts to support essential needs during the years of hardship. The humanitarian community in Sudan is calling for increased access and critically needed assistance to support these marginalized communities," said Khardiata Lo N'diaye, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General and Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator in Sudan.

United Nations humanitarian agencies have not been able to reach or provide life-saving assistance to support people in the five locations since 2011, when conflict broke out between the Government of Sudan and the SPLM-N. Gaining humanitarian access to these communities provides a critical opportunity to improve lives and rebuild livelihoods.

"Communities in these areas have been struggling and surviving on little or nothing for a decade. Access for humanitarian agencies so they can increase their assistance to these vulnerable communities is critical. With improved food security and other opportunities, families will be able to reintegrate with the rest of Sudan and start to recover and rebuild," said Eddie Rowe, United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) Country Director in Sudan.

WFP delivered 100 metric tons of nutritious biscuits for 25,000 school children in 83 schools on the five missions. This was the first assistance that people in these isolated areas had received from the UN in the last decade due to conflict and access constraints. A lack of food for students is one of the main challenges

in maintaining school enrolment in these isolated areas. Providing school meals is among the top priorities for WFP's response as access continues to open.

"Whilst these missions mark a major development, we need to ensure that humanitarian access to children and communities in need is always granted. No conditions should ever be set on access; humanitarian assistance should be provided at all times and from all places to those that need it. Findings from this mission are bleak. These children have been entirely 'left behind'. We have to act now to ensure these children have a future. Collectively, efforts must be made to ensure access and sustain and scale up assistance," said Abdullah Fadil, UNICEF Representative in Sudan.

Expanding humanitarian access to SPLM-N controlled enclaves is crucial to providing urgent assistance to an estimated 800,000 people in these areas, who desperately need relief following years of isolation. Ramping up support will help stabilize communities and pave the path for peacebuilding efforts, while reinforcing the UN's commitment to assist marginalised populations in Sudan.

The UN World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) participated in missions over the last six weeks to five isolated areas in SPLM-N El Hilu controlled areas including Zozak and Amora in Blue Nile State and Kau/Nyaro, Rashad/New Tegali, and Western Jebels in South Kordofan State.

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The United Nations World Food Programme is the 2020 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate. We are the world's largest humanitarian organization, saving lives in emergencies and using food assistance to build a pathway to peace, stability and prosperity for people recovering from conflict, disasters and the impact of climate change.

UNICEF promotes the rights and wellbeing of every child and is committed to the children of Sudan. We never give up on finding solutions that provide immediate help to save the lives of children or provide durable support so that those children grow up with dignity, health and an education.

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