In 2017, 1,159 humanitarian access incidents were reported by aid agencies in South Sudan. This is the highest number of incidents in a year, representing a significant increase, compared to 908 in 2016 and 909 in 2015. Although these incidents differ in nature and severity, their scope and spread across the country indicate that obstacles to the delivery of humanitarian action have persisted in a highly fluid operating environment. Thirty aid workers were killed in 2017, making it the deadliest year for humanitarians since conflict began in December 2013. At least 97 aid workers have been killed in South Sudan since the beginning of the crisis. About 47 per cent of the total incidents reported in 2017 involved violence against aid workers and assets. These incidents included murder, robbery, looting and threats or harassment, mostly affecting Juba, Rubkona and Wau counties. Although this is a reduction in the proportion of violent acts compared to 2016 (69 per cent), it is coupled with an increase in the number of aid worker deaths. Sixty-one looting incidents were reported in multiple locations across the country.

In 2017, active hostilities and violence against personnel continued to impact humanitarian operations, with 612 aid workers relocated in 54 incidents from multiple locations across the country. More than half of the relocations occurred in Koch, Leer and Mayendit (Unity) and Akobo (Jonglei), where over half a million people were in need of assistance and protection in 2017. Most of the relocations were followed by the suspension of life-saving activities affecting thousands of people, including in Unity, where teams responding to famine came under attack. Looting spiked in July 2017, with 15 incidents reported across the country, including six in which warehouses and trucks in transit were looted in Eastern Equatoria, Lakes, Upper Nile and Warrap, leading to the loss of 670 metric tons of food aid, enough to feed 40,000 people for a month. In October 2017, authorities issued a circular announcing work permit rates of up to US$4,000 per permit per year, which implied up to $7 million could be diverted to fees. Charges at checkpoints continued throughout the year and have remained fluid. In December, partners reported 66 checkpoints on the Juba-Bentiu road, some of which demanded up to SSP 3,000 (US$15) from motorists, making humanitarian cargo transport more costly.