

SOUTH SUDAN

SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER BRIEFING 2018



Humanitarian Figures

1.91 million

Internally Displaced People (IDPs) in South Sudan need humanitarian assistance, according to October reports by [\(OCHA\)](#)

6.1 million

people are severely food insecure. South Sudan is facing famine levels of food scarcity ([September 2018 Projection, Integrated Food Security Phase Classification](#))

297,150

people are seeking asylum in South Sudan. Refugee crises in North-East and Eastern Africa continue to pose a humanitarian emergency ([OCHA](#))

2.46 million

South Sudanese refugees are being hosted in neighbouring countries. Insecurity in South Sudan continues to drive Africa's biggest refugee crisis ([UNHR Regional Portal, 30 September 2018](#))

Highlights

- > South Sudan could be facing its toughest year yet as a declaration of famine is expected by 2019
- > UN ambassador expresses concerns over the Cessation of Hostilities agreement in September
- > Plans for a new state capital to make the seat of government more accessible are under consideration
- > Rebel leader Riek Machar has returned to Juba more than two years after the collapse of the 2016 peace deal

Key Developments

- > The Human Rights Watch has released a [report detailing violent attacks](#) and counterinsurgencies in the Western Region of South Sudan. Tens of thousands of civilians have been forced into United Nations protection sites in Wau to escape conflict over rebel-held areas.
- > As food is used as a weapon of war, many regions in South Sudan are reaching famine-levels of food shortages. Siege warfare and blockades against emergency relief are endangering efforts to fight famine, and [1.2 million](#) are facing starvation as civilian populations become targets of war.
- > The fragile peace deal between President Kiir's government and rebel forces is treated with scepticism as violence continues in many areas across the war-torn Western Region. Gross human rights abuses are being reported, and hostilities between warring factions have shown no sign of ceasing.

Key Individuals, Places and Groups

- › Juba: South Sudan's capital city. Also serves as the capital of Jubek State
- › Salva Kiir: President of South Sudan (2011-Present)
- › Riek Machar: Former Vice President (2011-2013)
- › CTSAMM: The Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism

Context

South Sudan gained independence from the Republic of Sudan following the Referendum of 2011, which saw [99 per cent](#) of those in the south voting to break away from the north. Political unrest erupted in 2013 after President Salva Kiir accused Vice-President Riek Machar of conspiring against his government. The dispute between government and rebel forces evolved into a devastating civil war that continues to be fought on political allegiances.

A recent report estimates [383,000](#) people have been killed as a result of civil war in South Sudan: twelve ceasefires have been signed since the humanitarian crisis began in 2013, and none have brought resolution or peace to the nation. Ethnic minorities have been persecuted by inter-communal violence, while other indiscriminate attacks have contributed to the mass-murder, rape and torture of South-Sudanese civilians caught up in the conflict.

South Sudan is the largest contributor to the refugee crisis in East and North-East Africa: insecurity in the region displaces [1.9 million people](#) and forces [2.4 million](#) into other countries as refugees. Brutality, acts of violence and political unrest have given rise to one of the world's worst situations of food insecurity, displacement and deepening poverty. South Sudan's reputation as the most dangerous place to be an aid worker makes the challenge of distributing food and medicine those who desperately need it even more difficult.

A Map of the Republic of South Sudan



Demographics

Based on the latest United Nations estimates, the population now exceeds [13 million](#). The populace is made up of many ethnic groups, the majority being Dinka who represent [35%](#) of South Sudanese peoples. [80%](#) live in rural areas, and half of the population live [below the poverty line](#). Population estimates in Wau, the region in which HART is active, is estimated at [118,330](#).

Latest Developments

Armed Forces Deliberately Starving Civilians in South Sudan

Government and rebel forces are using food as a weapon of war to [target civilian populations](#). Disputed territories are being starved-out, blockades are interrupting aid operations, and scorched earth policies have turned fertile states into wastelands. “It’s the worst humanitarian situation I have ever seen” [claims John Okoboi](#), a nutritionist working with the South Sudan Health Association. “People are afraid to grow food. If they cultivate and are caught by government soldiers they’ll be called rebels.” A declaration of famine is expected by the beginning of next year.

Scepticism Surrounding Cessation of Hostilities Agreement

A [statement given](#) by a UK representative to the United Nations expressed fears over a lasting peace deal in South Sudan at a Security Council briefing in November. Jonathan Allen reported concerns over the failure of UNMISS and CTSAMM operations as violence blocks access to the south of Wau, among other areas, as the missions are unable to monitor the ceasefire as mandated by the UN Security Council and IGAD. Allen also expressed concerns over [reports of continued violence](#), particularly in Wau and Yei states, which could undermine the commitment made by warring factions under the Cessation of Hostilities agreement signed in September.

Communities in Wau Under Threat

The [Human Rights Watch](#) was the first to uncover ongoing attacks and abuses by government forces in the Western Region in a report released in October. Communities affected in Wau, including those seeking refuge in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) protection of civilian sites, have described how [hostilities and human rights violations have persisted](#) in spite of the recent peace agreement. Violent clashes between government and rebel forces in late September and early October have stalled relief operations and continue to block humanitarian access to the Western Region.

UN Warns of Human Rights Abuses

A UN panel has exposed violations of the arms embargo imposed on South Sudan in July by the UN Security Council. The experts reported “[alarming levels](#)” of human rights abuses, acts of sexual violence and incidences of civilians suffering under extreme hunger. The panel claimed it was too soon to analyse the full effect of the embargo, which was put in place to cut off the provision of weapons to South Sudan and end the brutality under a five-year civil war. The [report said](#) “a number of violations have been noted by the panel”, which is also investigating foreign private security firms providing training in Juba to the national police and the army.

Timeline

September

[6.1 million people are found to be severely food insecure](#)

October

[The Human Rights Watch releases report detailing abuses in Western Region](#)

[Riek Machar returns to Juba to attend a peace ceremony](#)

November

[UN Report finds South Sudan's government is using food as a weapon of war](#)

[UN investigation uncovers arms embargo violations](#)

[UN Ambassador expresses concerns over lasting peace in South Sudan](#)