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## PRESS RELEASE

# South Sudan: LWF Condemns Aid Workers' Killing, Evacuates Maban Staff amid Growing Insecurity

## Temporary Suspension of Assistance to Sudanese Refugees and Host Communities

*GENEVA, 7 August 2014 (LWI)* - The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) has strongly condemned the targeted killing of aid workers in South Sudan's Maban county, as fighting escalates between militia groups in the country's Upper Nile State.

Speaking on the security situation in Maban county, the LWF Department for World Service (DWS) Director Rev. Eberhard Hitzler said the deteriorating insecurity has compelled the LWF to evacuate its staff from Upper Nile State, and to temporarily suspend the current humanitarian intervention work there.

"We reiterate LWF's strong condemnation of the loss of all civilian lives in the current fighting. At the same time, we strongly object the targeted killing of aid workers—the very people who are providing emergency assistance to South Sudanese communities and Sudanese refugees," he said.

According to United Nations sources, at least five aid workers were killed on 5 August in Bunj, in Upper Nile. LWF provides educational support to an estimated 20,000 Sudanese in refugee camps in Maban, as well as assistance to host communities.

Hitzler expressed LWF's commitment to continuing ongoing humanitarian and community development work in South Sudan, but noted this mandate can only be upheld in situations that do not impede meaningful intervention.

"While we strongly uphold our mandate to serve the vulnerable people caught in the conflict, the recurring insecurity, especially since last December, poses major risks. That is why we have taken the decision to temporarily evacuate all South Sudan program staff from Maban county and suspend our work there for now. We are closely monitoring the situation, assessing when we can resume assistance even on a reduced scale."

He said the DWS South Sudan humanitarian work will continue in Jonglei and Unity States, where LWF's assistance currently targets an estimated 60,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Hitzler noted that with no immediate solution in sight to the ongoing political negotiations for peace, "the potential is extremely high" for a worsening humanitarian crisis including famine in South Sudan. "A majority of the over 1 million IDPs are in remote areas, and the fear of recurring attacks prevents them from returning home to resume agricultural and other livelihood activities that they had to abandon," he added.

The DWS director reiterated LWF's previous appeals to parties to the current conflict in South Sudan "to put an end to the fighting, and consolidate their efforts in building peaceful co-existence in this young nation."

[Read more about the LWF response in South Sudan](#)