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LWF PLEADS FOR CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES AND HUMANITARIAN ACCESS TO CIVILIANS IN SOUTH SUDAN

High Risk of Conflict Destabilizing Entire Region

GENEVA, 25 April 2014 - The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) is highly concerned about the growing vulnerability of civilians and reduced humanitarian access to internally displaced people inside South Sudan. The recent targeted killings in the Unity State capital of Bentiu and deadly attack at the United Nations base in Bor, Jonglei State, only add to the growing insecurity since conflict erupted in the country in mid-December.

The LWF calls on the international community to hold the conflicting parties to the immediate cessation of hostilities agreed in January and to act expediently to enhance the presence of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). "We see a high risk of the conflict intensifying and destabilizing the entire region with a humanitarian crisis of unmanageable proportions," says Rev. Eberhard Hitzler, director of the LWF Department for World Service (DWS).

"That both sides in the conflict still believe in a military logic that has recently left thousands dead and caused unimaginable destruction can only dampen the signs of hope that this young nation had begun to experience," Hitzler adds.

The LWF remains committed to working with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, ACT Alliance members and other partners to assist internally displaced South Sudanese and those seeking refuge in neighboring Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda.

In mid-December last year, the LWF was compelled to scale down its intervention inside South Sudan, stop development work and evacuate some of its staff due to growing insecurity, the DWS director notes. At present, all staff is back and focusing work on relief assistance to internally displaced persons in remote areas.

Hitzler stresses the responsibility of the local authorities to collaborate with the global community in ensuring the protection of all civilians and safe humanitarian access.

In South Sudan, the LWF has worked for years with rural communities in Jonglei, Eastern Equatoria and Upper Nile states to build sustainable livelihoods, promote peace, human rights and reconciliation, and strengthen capacity to respond to disasters.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs estimates that there are more than 927,000 displaced persons in the country, with the highest increase in Upper Nile State by mid-April. In addition, there are another 289,000 South Sudanese refugees in the region.

[More on the LWF response to the South Sudan crisis](#)

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