

# SOUNDING THE ALARM

## The urgent needs of children in South Sudan



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The names of all individuals quoted and photographed in this report have been changed to protect their identity.

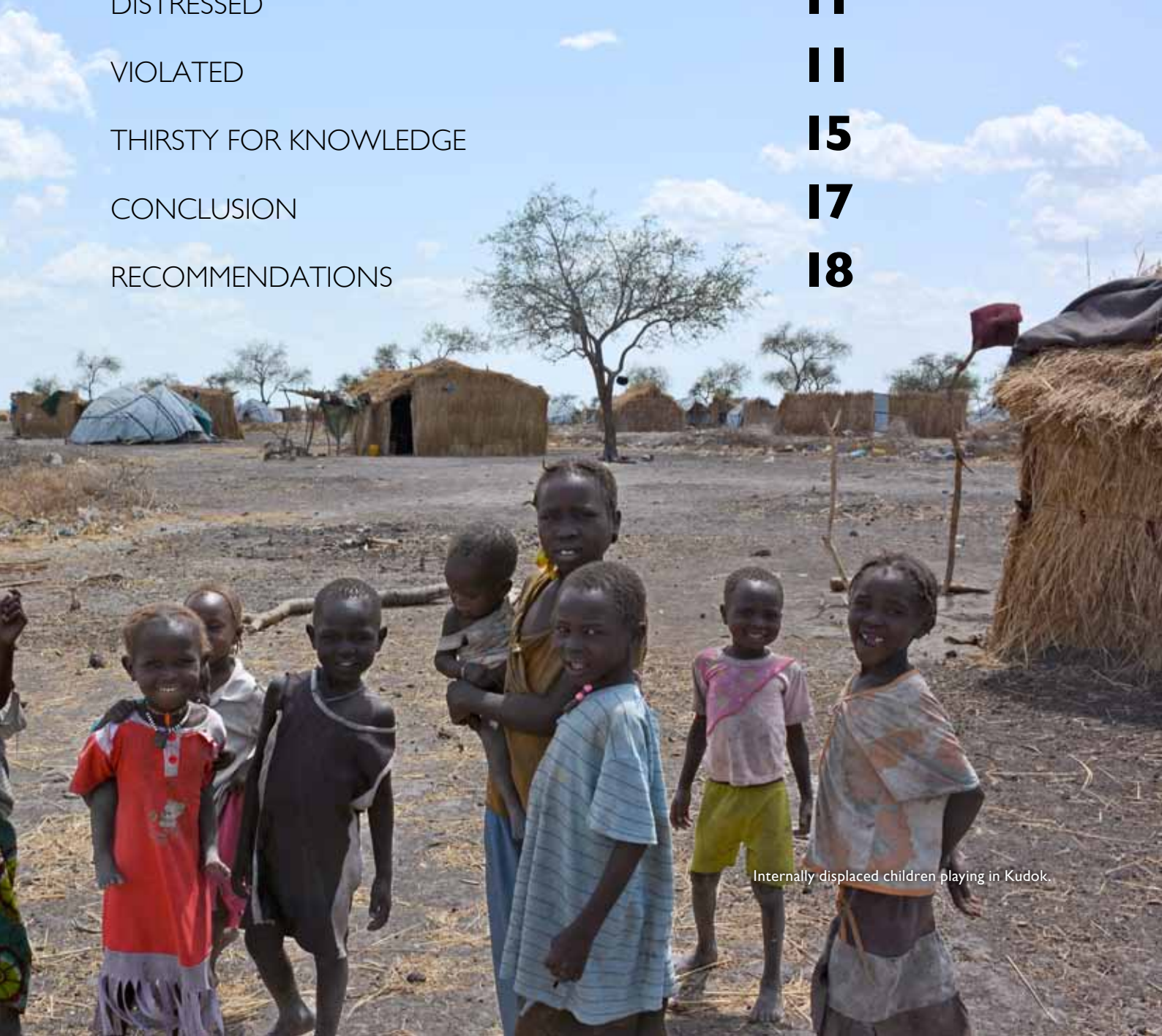
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Proofreading by Audrey Dorsch.

Cover picture: Internally displaced girl collecting from the Nile River, Upper Nile State.

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Internally displaced children playing in Kudok.



## INTRODUCTION

Children in South Sudan are in the midst of a dangerous crisis. The conflict, which erupted on 15 December 2013, has resulted in almost 5 million people being desperately in need of humanitarian assistance.<sup>1</sup> Over 1.3 million people have fled their homes – more than half of whom are children.<sup>2</sup> Almost a quarter of a million children will be severely malnourished by the end of the year, and up to 50,000 children under 5 may die if treatment is not scaled up immediately.<sup>3</sup>

The children caught up in this conflict have suffered or witnessed brutal atrocities. More than 9,000 have been recruited or used by armed forces and groups, where they become unwilling participants in the spiral of violence.<sup>4</sup> Many have lost or been separated from their parents. These children are distressed and vulnerable to grave violations of their rights, including sexual violence. They live in constant fear of attack and face a daily struggle to survive. As one child in South Sudan poignantly asks, “Can you imagine?”

This report documents the suffering that has befallen the children of South Sudan. But more importantly, it warns that unless urgent measures are taken things will get unimaginably worse. The South Sudan Crisis Response Plan for January to June 2014 is underfunded by 60 per cent,<sup>5</sup> with an alarming deficit for child protection initiatives.<sup>6</sup> There is an urgent need for donors to commit more resources to fund a comprehensive aid effort that will see children fed, cared for, educated and protected. It is also critical for the international community to become more engaged in bringing an end to the violence; ensuring humanitarian organisations have safe and unimpeded access to those in need; strengthening accountability mechanisms for rights violations; and supporting inclusive measures to promote peace, reconciliation and healing for the people of South Sudan.

Generations of children were killed and robbed of their most basic rights in the North-South conflict (1983–2005), which lasted 22 years and was the longest civil war in African history.<sup>7</sup> The current conflict has already taken a devastating toll on children. However, it does not need to condemn another generation of children to a life of suffering, fear and insecurity. Prior to the outbreak of hostilities in December 2013, improvements in food security, education, health and other basic services signalled a brighter future for this young nation. The current conflict has eroded some of these gains, but through concerted and effective action hope can be restored.

We need to ensure the children of South Sudan can enjoy what most children in the developed world take for granted: enough food to eat, a secure home to live in, the opportunity to go to school and the chance to live in peace. **Can you imagine?**

“We ran without stopping the whole time, day and night. If you stopped you died. But after running so long your heart is pounding and your legs are lead. Can you imagine? Your mouth is so dry you cannot even breathe or swallow. But there is no water and you can’t stop. Can you imagine? Then we had to cross a river. If you couldn’t swim you drowned. Many children were screaming and drowning but you have to keep swimming for your own survival. Can you imagine? Now we are here and look at us. We have nothing here. **Can you imagine?**”

Simon, age unknown

## HUNGRY

### MORE CHILDREN COULD DIE FROM MALNUTRITION THAN FROM CONFLICT

South Sudan is in the grip of a severe food crisis. Almost 4 million need emergency food aid,<sup>8</sup> and some parts of the part the country are at high risk of famine. Even more alarming is that almost a quarter of a million children will be severely malnourished by the end of the year, and up to 50,000 children under 5 may die if treatment is not scaled up immediately.<sup>9</sup>

Conflict has been the main driver of this food crisis. Prior to the fighting in December, the world's leading food and agriculture agencies held a positive outlook for South Sudan's overall food security situation.<sup>10</sup> The number of people having adequate food increased by more than 6 per cent from October 2012 to October 2013.<sup>11</sup> In November 2013, experts predicted that food security would continue to improve in several counties due to favourable rainfall, increased harvests, improved cross-border trade and the stabilisation of grain prices.<sup>12</sup> Although pockets of food insecurity were predicted in certain counties, no one expected the catastrophic decline we have seen in conflict-affected areas.<sup>13</sup> Almost 1.3 million people are experiencing "emergency" levels of food insecurity, while an additional 2.4 million people are experience "crisis" levels.<sup>14</sup>

### CONFLICT ERODES CRITICAL GAINS

The current conflict has eroded recent gains that had been made in food security.<sup>15</sup> The fighting has caused many people to flee their homes, abandoning their fields and livestock. Internally displaced people (IDP) living on UN peace-keeping bases or other informal settlements can no longer grow crops or tend livestock. They now rely on emergency food assistance to survive. Those who have not been internally displaced have faced difficulties in sowing crops due to interruptions in trade and supply corridors, which have limited the availability of seed and other agricultural supplies. A poor planting season is likely to decrease the amount of food in local markets. In addition, an increase in livestock deaths may be imminent due to setbacks in livestock vaccination programmes.<sup>16</sup>

South Sudan imports most of its staple food from neighbouring countries. The fighting has caused major disruptions to local and cross-border trade, with markets destroyed and supplies looted.<sup>17</sup> Traders from Sudan have been specifically targeted in recent attacks,<sup>18</sup> and this is likely to deter further foreign traders in the areas worst affected by the violence.

### A RACE AGAINST TIME TO SAVE LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS

Humanitarian organisations are in a race against time to pre-position food, essential items and agricultural supplies before the start of the rainy season in June. Once there is heavy rainfall, much of the country's limited road infrastructure will become inaccessible, making humanitarian organisations like World Vision almost solely reliant on costly air operations to bring aid to conflict-affected areas. The hostilities have severely impeded efforts to pre-position supplies, particularly along key transport routes, which means that humanitarian organisations have been largely dependent on transporting supplies via air already,



A mother nursing her children in Malakal, Upper Nile.

which is expensive. The limited availability of aircraft to transport supplies has posed major logistical challenges. Therefore, there is a critical need for humanitarian organisations to receive more funding to transport emergency food aid and other supplies via air, both before and during the rainy season, to ensure continued access to food and nutrition treatments in conflict- and flood-affected areas. It will also be important for donors and humanitarian organisations to start planning livelihood recovery activities, where feasible, to facilitate a return to planting, harvesting, and tending of livestock to prevent further food insecurity.

### **WORLD VISION CALLS ON:**

- Donors to scale up funding for food aid to those affected by the conflict, particularly for the most vulnerable: children under 5 and pregnant and lactating women.
- Donors and humanitarian organisations to prevent further stresses on livelihoods by planning livelihood-recovery activities alongside critical life-saving assistance and nutrition interventions.
- Donors to provide funding to urgently increase airlift, storage and logistics capacities to support the prepositioning of food aid, special nutrition supplements and key livelihoods-recovery assets.



Photo: Judy Moore/World Vision

World Vision staff screening a child for malnutrition in Malakal, Upper Nile.





Rose was eight and a half months pregnant when she had to run from armed men. Her labour pains started when she was running. She desperately willed them to stop, but they didn't. Some women stopped and helped her, and she gave birth screaming by the roadside as her four other children looked on terrified. Their father, Rose's husband, had been murdered in front of his family a few days earlier. She stares at her baby and says: "My breast milk is dry and I can't feed him properly. At night I can't sleep because I am so hungry. I try to reassure the children but I am scared."



## DISPLACED

### RUNNING SCARED

Since fighting erupted in December 2013, more than 1.3 million South Sudanese have been forced to flee their homes.<sup>19</sup> Almost 1 million people have been internally displaced within South Sudan – more than half of whom are children.<sup>20</sup> More than 300,000 people have sought refuge in neighbouring countries, including Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and Sudan.<sup>21</sup>

### STRETCHED BEYOND LIMITS

More than 85,000 of those who are internally displaced within South Sudan are living in Protection of Civilian (PoC) sites on United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) bases.<sup>22</sup> These sites were originally established by UNMISS to provide immediate protection to those fleeing violence. Countless civilians would have lost their lives had UNMISS not taken this action. Almost six months later, tens of thousands of children are still calling these sites home.

As the violence intensified, people fled in their thousands to UNMISS PoC sites. All of the eight PoC sites in the country are now dangerously overcrowded. World Vision is working in one PoC site where there are more than 20,000

“When the fighting first started we ran to the other end of town. But there was shelling so we had to run back. When we got back to our home we saw that many people were dead. They had been shot as they ran. There was no safety on any side of the city.”

Maria, 10



Internally displaced people living in a spontaneous settlement in Upper Nile.



Internally displaced people living in a spontaneous settlement in Upper Nile.

people crammed into a space the size of three football pitches. Tensions are mounting as people are living in extremely confined spaces, and there is increased competition for food, water, shelter, health care and other essentials. Overcrowding will also increase the risk of disease and infection, which is likely to worsen once heavy rainfall starts in June. Many PoC sites are susceptible to flooding, so there are particular concerns about the outbreak of water-borne diseases.<sup>23</sup> The overcrowding is also likely to increase protection risks for the most vulnerable, particularly children and those living with disabilities. As people become increasingly frustrated with living in crowded conditions, there is a heightened risk of physical violence. Children living in confined PoC sites are displaying higher levels of psychosocial distress than children living in IDP settlements where there is more space to play. Examples of such distress include frequent crying, screaming, fighting and having nightmares. It is therefore critical for UNMISS and humanitarian organisations to work together to address overcrowding in PoC sites, including expanding the perimeters of existing sites or establishing new ones. This will help give humanitarian organisations sufficient space to deliver assistance, in line with minimum standards, and in a way that upholds people's safety and dignity.

## REACHING THE UNREACHED

While conditions in PoC sites are dire, the vast majority of internally displaced are living outside these sites in informal settlements – without adequate protection and often more exposed to the weather. It is these people who are most at risk, but they are the hardest to reach.

Insecurity has prevented humanitarian organisations from scaling up activities to provide assistance to internally displaced in hard-to-reach areas. According to the UN, 20 per cent of internally displaced people are inaccessible due to active hostilities and restrictions on humanitarian access.<sup>24</sup> There is an urgent need for UNMISS to be given additional resources to increase the frequency and geographic scope of its patrols beyond areas close to its current bases, particularly in Upper Nile, Jonglei and Unity states. It is also critical for humanitarian organisations to receive more funding to support costly relief operations in remote areas. This will help enable humanitarian organisations access those in need before it is too late.

### WORLD VISION CALLS ON:

- The parties to the conflict to immediately end hostilities and cease all violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, including attacks on civilians. This will prevent further displacement.
- The parties to the conflict to immediately allow UN and humanitarian organisations safe and unimpeded access to provide emergency assistance to those in need in South Sudan.
- Donors to provide additional funding to enable humanitarian organisations to rapidly scale up the provision of assistance to those in need, particularly in remote areas.
- Donors to provide additional resources for UNMISS to expand the geographic scope of its operations to improve security conditions for humanitarian organisations to safely deliver assistance to those in need, particularly in remote areas beyond UNMISS bases.
- UNMISS to take urgent action, in consultation with humanitarian organisations, to relieve overcrowding in PoC sites, to decrease the risk of disease and infection, and mitigate protection risks for the most vulnerable, especially children.

## VULNERABLE

### ORPHANED OR SEPARATED FROM PARENTS

More than 3,300 of children have been registered as orphaned, separated or unaccompanied by their parents since the conflict broke out in December 2013.<sup>25</sup> They have been left to fend for themselves or are being supported by community members who are often struggling themselves.<sup>26</sup> It is feared the actual numbers of orphaned, separated and unaccompanied children may be much higher due to challenges in counting those who are displaced in insecure and remote areas.

Customarily, extended family members bear responsibility for children who have permanently or temporarily lost their parents.<sup>27</sup> However, decades of conflict have eroded the ability of families to cope with the increased number of orphaned and separated children.<sup>28</sup> In a recent study, adult respondents indicated that caring for orphaned or separated children is an unwelcome burden, which usually falls entirely on women.<sup>29</sup>

World Vision is working with other humanitarian organisations to identify children who have been orphaned, are separated from their parents or are unaccompanied by relatives. These children are highly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation including sexual violence and recruitment by armed forces or groups. They are also likely to face significant challenges in accessing life-saving assistance. It is therefore important to scale up efforts for family tracing and reunification, including across borders in neighbouring countries where refugees have fled. There is also a need to provide interim care arrangements, preferably supporting extended family to care for unaccompanied children, and to provide follow-up support to ensure the well-being of those families and the children in their care.

#### WORLD VISION CALLS ON:

- Donors to increase funding for family tracing and reunification, including across borders in neighbouring countries.
- Donors to scale up funding for interim care arrangements for children who have lost or been separated from their parents, including resources for following up on such children to ensure their safety and well-being.
- Donors to fund an increase in child protection specialists to help ensure child protection considerations are addressed and mainstreamed in the planning and implementation of all humanitarian response activities.



Internally displaced children sleeping in the open in Upper Nile.

## DISTRESSED

The conflict is taking a devastating toll on children. Many bear not only physical wounds, but also emotional and psychological wounds after seeing family members and friends subjected to brutal violence. Most have been forced to flee their homes with little more than the clothes on their back. In one PoC site where World Vision is working, there are many children who arrived with only the pyjamas they were wearing when they fled their homes at night.

Often these children have had to make frantic journeys to seek refuge, moving multiple times to flee violence. Even when they do find relative safety in a PoC site, they continue to live in fear of further attacks. The widely publicised attack on civilians at the PoC site in Bor on April 15, 2014 has caused many children to believe they are not safe even on UNMISS bases. They also fear violence and abuse from those living around them. Tensions are mounting in overcrowded



Young girl at a Protection of Civilians site in the state of Upper Nile.

“We hid in the church but that wasn’t safe. The men with guns found the young men and took them away to kill them. They took all our property from our house. They even took my mother’s mattress and bed sheet.”

Simon, 9

PoC sites daily. In addition to living in fear, these children are also faced with the distress of social upheaval and not being able to go to school. When asked what activities they miss, children typically respond by saying they miss going to school, playing with friends, visiting relatives and going to church.

Children living outside the vicinity of UNMISS bases are also facing high levels of distress. They have told World Vision staff that they are scared to sleep at night and face the daily stress of trying to find enough food and water to survive. Many are also struggling to cope with being separated from family members after being constantly on the move to escape the fighting. In addition to needing shelter, food, water and other essential supplies, they require psychosocial support to help them cope with all the atrocities they have experienced or witnessed.

It is important to scale up services aimed at providing children with the opportunity to safely play, learn and receive other forms of support. These measures will contribute to children's recovery, improve or stabilise their psychosocial well-being, promote learning and mitigate protection risks. Such initiatives are also likely to help children receive maximum benefit from other relief activities such as nutrition supplementation.<sup>30</sup> They are also likely to provide overburdened caregivers with some respite to manage other daily tasks and deal with their own emotional and psychological stress.

#### **WORLD VISION CALLS ON:**

- Donors to support the provision of psychosocial support to children in conflict-affected areas, including the provision of Psychological First Aid by trained community workers.
- Donors to increase funding to expand access to Child Friendly Spaces and community-based care groups to provide children with a safe space to learn, play and receive other forms of support.
- Donors to provide funding for ensuring mental health and psychosocial support considerations are addressed and mainstreamed in the planning, implementation and monitoring of all humanitarian response activities.

## **VIOLATED**

### **SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

According to the UN, all parties to the conflict have committed brutal acts of sexual violence against civilians, including children.<sup>31</sup> These include rape at gun-point, gang-rape, abduction, sexual slavery and forced abortion.<sup>32</sup> Radio stations have been used to incite men to commit vengeful acts of sexual violence against women and girls of certain ethnicities.<sup>33</sup>

Alarming, the UN has received reports of rape and sexual violence being committed against young girls – one as young as eight years old.<sup>34</sup> It is difficult

to verify the scale and nature of sexual violence committed against children due to under-reporting. Even in peacetime, girls have tended to avoid reporting or seeking treatment for sexual violence because of stigmatisation and the fear they will be forced to marry the perpetrator.<sup>35</sup> The challenges with reporting and seeking treatment are even greater during conflict. There are limited reporting and referral mechanisms, and health care centres have been destroyed.

While the risk of sexual violence perpetrated by both sides of the conflict is high, there is also a risk of children being subjected to sexual violence by peers in PoC sites and other IDP locations. Girls have been subjected to sexual violence when performing traditional gender-based roles such as collecting water, firewood, food and other supplies.<sup>36</sup> As young men become increasingly frustrated and violent due to protracted displacement, girls could be exposed to an even higher risk of sexual violence. Meanwhile, further assessments are needed to understand the particular vulnerabilities, threats and risks faced by boys.

### **WORLD VISION CALLS ON:**

- The parties to the conflict to immediately cease all violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, including acts of sexual violence against children.
- Donors to increase funding to support the urgent scale-up of gender-sensitive measures to prevent, monitor and respond to acts of sexual violence, including against children.
- Donors to ensure that UNMISS has the resources to protect civilians, including preventing, monitoring, reporting and responding to grave violations of children's rights..

## **RECRUITMENT OR USE BY ARMED FORCES AND GROUPS**

Since the current conflict began, more than 9,000 children have been recruited or associated with armed forces or groups in violation of both international law and domestic law in South Sudan.<sup>37</sup> Children as young as 12 or 13 years old have reportedly been serving as child soldiers.<sup>38</sup> These children are not only exposed to the risk of being killed, maimed and injured, but are also missing out on education, which will have longer-term implications for their well-being and development.

Children who are displaced and separated from family members are highly vulnerable to being recruited or used by armed forces and groups. Adolescent boys are particularly vulnerable, and many have sought refuge in PoC sites for fear of being forcibly recruited. It is therefore critical to scale up measures to prevent forcible recruitment, including the use of community-based protection mechanisms and efforts to keep families together.

In addition to forced recruitment, there is also a risk that adolescents may voluntarily join armed forces and groups if their families cannot feed or support



Photo: Rich Moseanko/World Vision

Children making figures out of mud clay in Kudok. When asked what they were making, they said "soldiers with trucks and guns".



them. They may also decide to take up arms to fight against those who have perpetrated violence against their own families or community members. It is therefore critical for humanitarian actors to increase psychosocial support, education and peacebuilding activities for children to mitigate the risk of voluntary recruitment, including providing the support they need to deal with the effects of violence and protracted displacement.

### **WORLD VISION CALLS ON:**

- The parties to the conflict to immediately release all children under the age of 18, involved directly or indirectly with hostilities, to the relevant UN and humanitarian organisations, and cease the recruitment of children or use of children in conflict in compliance with international law.
- The Government of the Republic of South Sudan to recommit to fulfilling the National Action Plan to End Child Recruitment signed on 12 March 2012 and also address new incidents of recruitment and use of children by armed forces since 15 December 2013. This should include measures relating to the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of children.
- The SPLA/M (Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement) in opposition and its allied forces to appropriately address, in consultation with the UN, incidents of recruitment or use of children which have occurred under their command. This should include DDR measures.
- Donors to increase funding for humanitarian organisations to provide child protection, psychosocial support and emergency education interventions to mitigate the risk of more children being recruited into armed forces and groups.
- Donors to ensure that the UNMISS has the resources required to effectively protect civilians, including preventing, monitoring, reporting and responding to the recruitment and use of children in armed forces and groups.

Photo: Rich Moseanko/World Vision



Boys gathered in a Protection of Civilians site in Upper Nile.

## THIRSTY FOR KNOWLEDGE

Prior to the conflict, South Sudan had among the lowest education indicators in the world. Lack of schools and trained teachers impeded access to education. Poor school infrastructure (with limited or no latrines, or drinking water) and overcrowded classrooms also affected the quality of education, with classrooms having on average 129 children.<sup>39</sup> Despite these major challenges, significant progress had been made since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005. Primary school enrolment had doubled between 2005 and 2009.<sup>40</sup> In 2012, 60 per cent of thirteen-year-olds reported having received some schooling, up from 40 per cent the previous decade.<sup>41</sup>

The conflict has already eroded a number of important gains that had been made in education, particularly in conflict-affected states. Over half a million children have been internally displaced and have limited access to education.<sup>42</sup> Schools have been occupied, used and looted by the parties to the conflict.<sup>43</sup> Since mid-December, the UN has registered 32 incidents involving the military use of schools and two incidents of looting of school property.<sup>44</sup>

It is imperative that parties to the conflict immediately vacate schools for civilian use in accordance with international law. It is also important for humanitarian organisations to scale up access to inclusive, safe and protective emergency learning spaces for children and youth affected by the conflict, as well as provide life-skills training and psychosocial support.<sup>45</sup> This can save children's lives through protecting them against exploitation and harm and provide them with knowledge and skills to survive.<sup>46</sup> It can also help bridge children's education until they can return to formal schools, and thereby mitigate the effects of the disruption on their long-term development.

### WORLD VISION CALLS ON:

- The parties to the conflict to immediately vacate schools and return them to civilian use in accordance with international law.
- Donors to provide funding for humanitarian organisations to scale up access to protective emergency learning spaces and life-skills training for children and youth affected by the conflict.



“The situation for the children here is horrible. If we don't go to school we can't learn. But if we leave the UN base we will die. So we have no choice but to stay here.”

Theresea, 13 years old

## CONCLUSION

South Sudan experienced the longest civil war in Africa's history, which endured for 22 years (1983–2005).<sup>47</sup> Over 2.5 million people lost their lives as a result of this conflict, and more than 4 million were displaced.<sup>48</sup> It robbed generations of South Sudanese children of receiving an education and enjoying a childhood free of fear, insecurity and suffering.

Today, we face the prospect of these horrors being repeated for future generations. The conflict which broke out in December 2013 has already devastated the lives of millions of children. Many have been killed, injured and subjected to grave violations of their rights. Hundreds of thousands are displaced and are hungry. They are distressed, vulnerable and desperately in need of protection.

It is critical that the international community does all it can to help bring an end to the violence and ensure children and their families receive the assistance and protection they deserve. The children of South Sudan should not have to live in constant fear of attack, or endure the suffering of protracted displacement. The children of South Sudan – like all children – deserve to live in peace.



Girls playing in a Protection of Civilians site in the state of Upper Nile.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### TO DONORS:

**1** World Vision calls on donors to fully fund the South Sudan Crisis Response Plan for June to December 2014, including funding for all sectors.

**2** In view of the rapidly deteriorating food security situation, World Vision specifically calls for increased funding for:

- The rapid scale-up of emergency food assistance to all those in need, particularly in remote conflict-affected areas.
- The urgent provision of nutrition interventions, particularly for children under 5 years of age and pregnant and lactating mothers.
- The implementation of livelihood-recovery activities alongside critical life-saving assistance to prevent higher levels of food insecurity and further stresses on livelihoods.

**3** Given that the child protection and education sectors remain seriously under-funded, World Vision specifically calls on donors to significantly increase funding for:

- Scaling up family tracing and reunification activities for children who have been orphaned or separated from their parents, as well as supporting interim care arrangements for such children.
- Expanding child protection and psychosocial support services through community-based mechanisms. This should include increasing access to Child Friendly Spaces and community-based care groups to provide children with a safe space to learn, play and receive other forms of psychosocial support, including psychological first aid.
- Increasing the number of child protection specialists to help ensure child protection, mental health and psychosocial support considerations are addressed and mainstreamed in the planning and implementation of all humanitarian response activities.
- Scaling up access to emergency learning spaces and life-skills training for children and youth affected by the conflict.

**4** In view of children being subjected to grave violations of their rights, including sexual violence and recruitment or use in armed forces and groups, World Vision calls on donors to increase funding for:

- UNMISS to strengthen measures to protect civilians, including preventing, monitoring and responding to grave violations of children's rights.
- Scaling up gender-sensitive measures to prevent, monitor and respond to acts of sexual violence, including against children.

### TO UNMISS:

World Vision calls on:

- Strengthen measures to protect civilians, including preventing, monitoring, reporting and responding to grave violations of children's rights.
- Expand the geographic scope of its patrols to improve security for humanitarian organisations to safely deliver assistance to those in need, particularly in remote areas beyond UNMISS bases.
- Take urgent action, in consultation with humanitarian organisations, to relieve overcrowding in PoC sites, to decrease the risk of disease and infection, and mitigate protection risks for the most vulnerable, especially children.

### TO THE PARTIES TO THE CONFLICT:

**1** World Vision calls on the parties to the conflict to:

- Immediately cease hostilities in accordance with the "Agreement to Resolve the Conflict in South Sudan Agreement", which they signed on 9 May 2014.
- Immediately cease all violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, including the grave violations of children's rights.
- Immediately allow humanitarian organisations to have safe and unimpeded access to provide humanitarian assistance to those in need in South Sudan.
- Immediately release all children under the age of 18, involved directly or indirectly with hostilities, to the relevant UN and humanitarian organisations, and cease further recruitment in accordance with international law.
- Immediately vacate schools and return them to civilian use in accordance with international law.

**2** The Government of the Republic of South Sudan to recommit to fulfilling the National Action Plan to End Child Recruitment, signed on 12 March 2012, and also address new incidents of recruitment and use of children by armed forces since December 2013. This should include measures relating to the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of children.

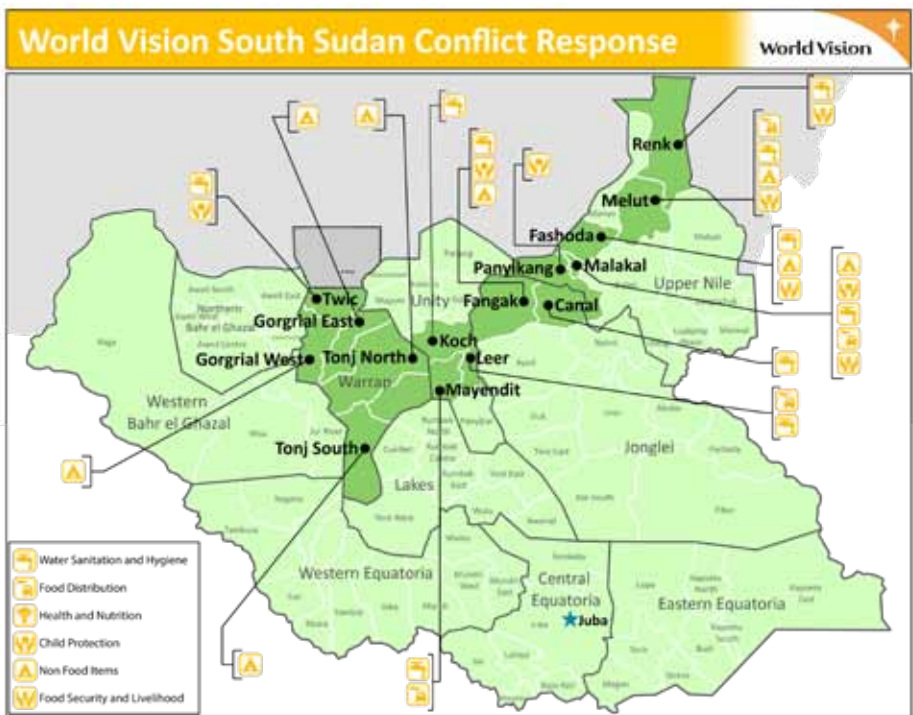
**3** The SPLA/M in Opposition and its Allied Forces to appropriately address, in consultation with the UN, incidents of recruitment or use of children which occurred under their command. This should include DDR measures.

## WORLD VISION SOUTH SUDAN

World Vision has been operating in the area now known as South Sudan for over 25 years. Over this time, it has established a strong presence in the country with operations in seven out of the ten states, including Upper Nile, Western Equatoria, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Unity, Central Equatoria, Jonglei and Warrap States.

During this time, World Vision has worked with local communities to implement development and recovery programmes focused on health and nutrition; water, hygiene and sanitation; food security and economic development; food assistance; education; peace building; protection and delivering emergency assistance.

When hostilities erupted in December 2103, World Vision was one of the first humanitarian organisations to go to the affected areas to undertake rapid needs assessments. Since then, it has been providing immediate life-saving assistance to internally displaced people in in Upper Nile, Unity and Warrap States, including food, nutrition supplements, clean water, latrines, hygiene kits, shelter items and mosquito nets. It has also been running Child Friendly Spaces to provide children with a safe space to play, learn and receive psychosocial and other forms of support. It has also been implementing a range of community-based child protection activities and undertaking family tracing and reunification for separated and unaccompanied children. The map below depicts where WV is providing conflict-related emergency relief:



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