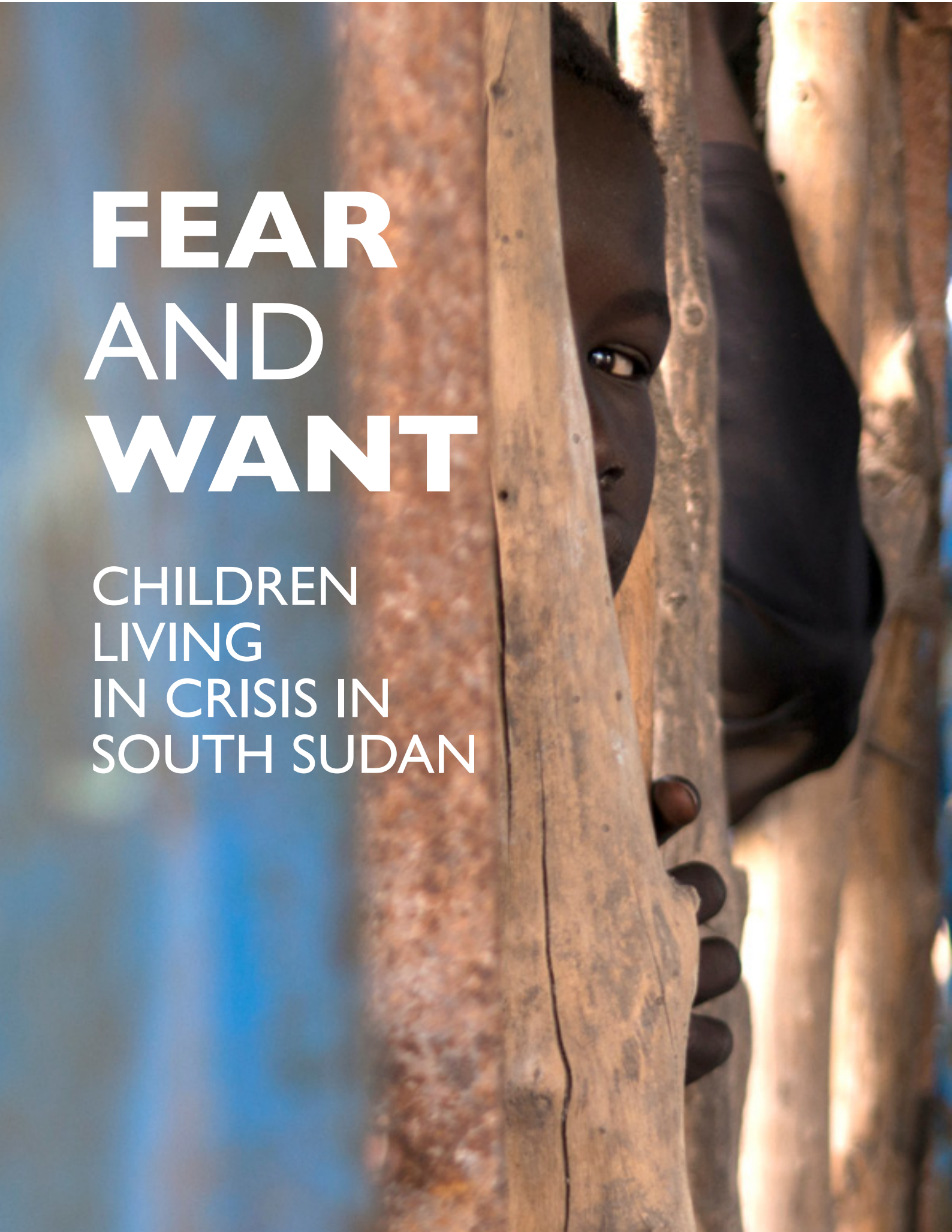


FEAR AND WANT

CHILDREN
LIVING
IN CRISIS IN
SOUTH SUDAN



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CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
METHODOLOGY	7
FINDINGS	9
IN WAR, LIVING IN FEAR	9
AT WORK, NOT IN SCHOOL	12
IN DANGER, UNABLE TO GO HOME	14
HOPES FOR THE FUTURE	17
RECOMMENDATIONS	18



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

One year ago, hundreds of thousands of children's lives were uprooted when violence broke out in South Sudan. Today, those children live in fear of violence, are out of school, are unable to return home, and face risks to the rights they – like children all over the world – are entitled to.

After a peaceful independence referendum in 2011, the people of South Sudan were filled with hope that, as the world's youngest country, they could finally leave behind decades of war and forge a brighter future. But the promise of a better life for most South Sudanese was shattered in December 2013, when the country descended into conflict.

In 2014, three years after the world's newest country was born, more than one in three (3.8 million) people require humanitarian assistance.¹ Close to two million people have fled their homes – more than 400,000 to neighbouring countries.² Several states in South Sudan have seen significant levels of violence, particularly in Upper Nile, Unity and Jonglei states. Some 100,000 people are taking shelter inside United Nations Protection of Civilians³ sites across the country, where they have fled to escape violence.⁴ Millions more have taken refuge in communities and surrounding areas, leaving them unprotected and, for those in hard to reach areas, without access to life-saving aid.

In May 2014, ahead of the Oslo Donor Conference, World Vision published a report on the situation of children in South Sudan, warning decision makers that 'unless urgent measures are taken things will get unimaginably worse' for children.⁵ Sadly, six months later the situation has further deteriorated. More children have been displaced; more have been recruited into armed groups and forces; and more have been separated from their families.

According to UNICEF, out of an estimated 748,000 internally displaced children, 400,000 children are out of school; more than 11,000 children have been recruited into armed groups and forces; and over 6,600 children have been separated from their families.⁶ As 60 per cent of South Sudanese people are under 18, these numbers indicate a grim future for the children of South Sudan, some

CHILDREN
TOLD WORLD
VISION
THAT CHILD
LABOUR IS
REPLACING
THEIR
CLASSROOM.



1 United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 'South Sudan Crisis Situation Report No. 60', 30 October 2014, https://southsudan.humanitarianresponse.info/system/files/documents/files/South_Sudan_Situation_Report_60_as_of_30_October_2014.pdf.

2 United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 'South Sudan Crisis Situation Report No. 58', 16 October 2014, http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/South_Sudan_Situation_Report_58_as_of_16_October.pdf.

3 Protection of Civilians sites (POCs) were established on United Nations Mission in South Sudan bases in December 2013, when civilians sought shelter because of violence. Currently ten POCs across the country host about 100,000 people.

4 UNICEF, 'South Sudan Humanitarian Situation Report no. 44', 21 October 2014, <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UNICEF%20South%20Sudan%20SitRep%20%2342%20-%2021%20Oct%202014%20.pdf>.

5 World Vision, *Sounding the Alarm: The urgent needs of children in South Sudan*, May 2014.

6 UNICEF, 'South Sudan Humanitarian Situation Report no. 44', 21 October 2014; UNICEF, 'South Sudan Humanitarian Situation Report', No.19 for 15–21 April; UNIMSS, *Conflict in South Sudan: A Human Rights Report*, 8 May 2014, page 17.



Barbed wire prevents intruders from entering an area built to protect people who have fled violence in Juba, South Sudan.

of whom have already lived through a civil war.⁷ While emergency programmes have received 74 per cent of the funding needed from international donors, programmes that ensure the protection of people, particularly children, are not fully funded and the money received will only sustain the response to the end of December 2014.⁸

World Vision spoke to 160 children in three areas in Central Equatoria and Upper Nile states to find out how they are living and what risks they are coping with every day. Their experiences give a snapshot of the wider conflict and how it is

⁷ South Sudan Education Cluster, *Education in South Sudan Cannot Wait*, 16 June 2014, <https://southsudan.humanitarianresponse.info/system/files/documents/files/EducationCannotWaitinSouthSudan2014.pdf>.

⁸ Financial Tracking Services, 'Strategic Response Plan(s): Republic of South Sudan - Crisis Response Plan 2014', 2014, http://fts.unocha.org/reports/daily/ocha_R32sum_A1024____2_December_2014_%2803_01%29.pdf.

affecting children, and World Vision believes it provides a valuable, unexplored window into the experiences of children and families across the conflict-affected areas of South Sudan.

WHAT CHILDREN TOLD US

Children live in fear. They believe that the armed conflict may again be directed at them and their families. Many remember when armed men forced them to leave their homes, and most experience fear and distress without the comfort or familiarity of home.

Every child we spoke to expressed a desire to return to school. They say school provides them with a sense of stability, but going to school is often not possible, as the education system in the three most conflict-affected states is severely affected and under-resourced. Since the beginning of the crisis, over 1,100 schools in the most affected states (Jonglei, Upper Nile and Unity) have been closed.⁹ In addition, 124 schools are reported as being used for military purposes in violation of international law, according to the United Nations.¹⁰

Children say they spend more time working – sometimes in hazardous or harmful conditions – and that this has replaced time spent learning. Children are expected to generate an income for their families through jobs such as tending market stalls or transporting goods. If this trend continues, and children are working rather than going to school, then the foundation for a peaceful and prosperous future in South Sudan will continue to erode.

Protecting children from abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence must be a priority for all those responding to the crisis in South Sudan.

Children's needs are clear:

- End the conflict.
- Enable them to return home.
- Protect them from harm.
- Return them to school.

Perry Mansfield
National Director, World Vision South Sudan

“ In the future, I am afraid of the war. People will be killed again. The shelter does not feel okay. I want to leave to Ethiopia. I am afraid we will run again.’
‘They keep going back and forth to Addis to talk about peace, but there is no peace. The whole world is watching and doing nothing and there is still no peace.’”

Elizabeth, 15, Topping
Protection of Civilians site,
Juba

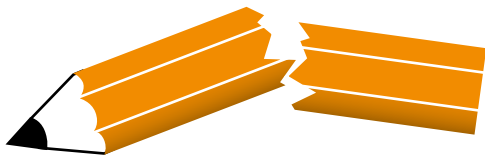
⁹ South Sudan Education Cluster, 16 June 2014.

¹⁰ UN Report of the Secretary-General on South Sudan, 30 September 2014, http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2014/708.



FOUR HUNDRED THOUSAND

children have dropped out of school due to conflict since December 2013



The UN has received more reports of grave violations of child rights from December 2013 to now than in all of 2012 and 2013 combined. These include: killing and maiming of children; recruitment and use of children as soldiers; sexual violence against children; attacks on schools and hospitals; abduction of children; and denial of humanitarian access to children.

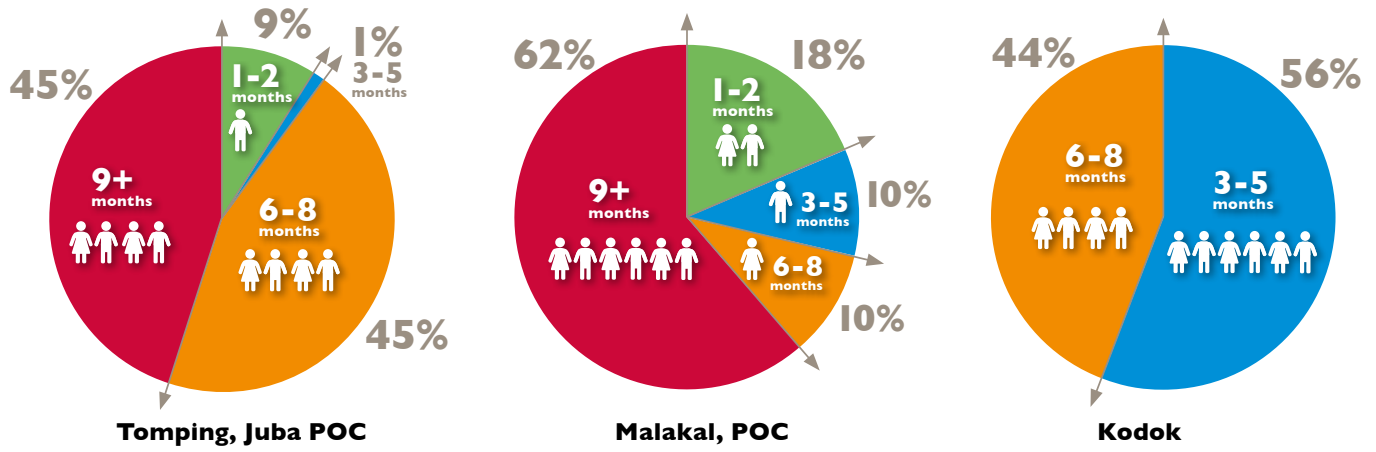


31,601

children have been reported as affected by these grave violations since December 2013 – this is more than in 2012 and 2013 combined



Average length of displacement of children by location



METHODOLOGY

In October 2014, World Vision conducted focus group discussions with children in three age groups (5- to 8-year-olds, 9- to 13-year-olds and 14- to 18-year-olds) in Topping POC site, Malakal POC site and Kodok town.¹¹ The 14- to 18-year-olds group was divided by gender, with boys interacting with male interviewers and girls with female interviewers. World Vision conducted a total of 11 focus group discussions with 160 children. The report is not a comprehensive view of all affected children in South Sudan, but the children's views consistently highlighted key themes. These views can and should inform decisions and changes required to improve protection for all children affected by the ongoing crisis in South Sudan. Additionally, World Vision staff interviewed key informants from humanitarian agencies to augment information gathered in the focus groups.

The facilitation team ensured safe and ethical participation of children, adhering to World Vision's child protection protocols. In the process of consultations with children, where World Vision encountered cases of abuse and misconduct against children, we ensured they were appropriately addressed.

All names have been changed to protect the identity of the children involved, and all photos were taken and used with informed consent.

¹¹ Protection of Civilians sites (POCs) were established on United Nations Mission in South Sudan bases in December 2013, when civilians sought shelter because of violence. Currently POCs across the country host about 100,000 people.



A World Vision staff member conducts a focus group in Juba, South Sudan, to find out what children need and want.



Rows of tents house people displaced by violence in a camp that protects civilians near Malaka, South Sudan.

FINDINGS

IN WAR, LIVING IN FEAR

'I am afraid that if war comes again to Juba, the tanks will come to the Protection of Civilians site and crush us.'
Mariam, 12 years old, Topping Protection of Civilians site, Juba

The children in South Sudan are fearful about their future. They have experienced extreme violence and are afraid it will return.¹² They fear that they will be forced to flee or that their tents will be destroyed again.

Children in all focus groups say they are afraid of what will happen to them and their families. Armed groups are a concern for children staying inside and outside POCs. Children inside these sites are afraid of adults fighting, a common occurrence that they link to increased alcohol consumption, distress and cramped living conditions.¹³ Among children who go to school, many describe being afraid when children fight each other on the way to school and at school, where they are supposed to be able to escape violence and stress.

“ I would like to see normal behaviour because since the crisis, people’s behaviour has changed because of the trauma. They feel scared and remember bad things.”

Mariam, 12, Topping Protection of Civilian site, Juba

¹² Validated by Assessments Capacities Project, *Disaster Needs Analysis – South Sudan*, 3 May 2014, http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/south_sudan_upper_nile_unity_and_jonglei_conflict_may_2014.pdf, page 40.

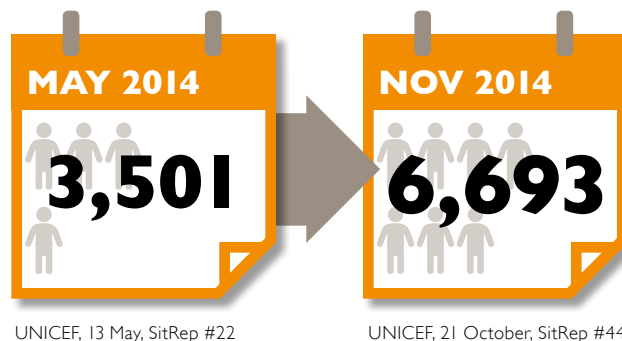
¹³ Aditi Gorur, *Perceptions of Security Among Internally Displaced Persons in Juba, South Sudan*, Stimson Center, September 2014, <http://www.stimson.org/images/uploads/research-pdfs/CIC-Perceptions-of-Security-Juba-FINAL-WEB.pdf>.



Mary, Esther and Rose listen patiently during a focus group carried out by World Vision in Juba, South Sudan. They told World Vision staff what they had experienced since a civil war broke out in the country in December 2013.

Failure to address the effects of distress and fear has significant repercussions on individual children and jeopardises the future of South Sudan. Long-term stress can have life-long impacts on learning, health and development.¹⁴ As 12-year-old Miriam says, the people around her have changed as a result of the conflict. It is critical that governments, donors and humanitarian agencies mitigate the impact of longterm stress on children's physical, mental and emotional development. Child protection agencies have tried to integrate psychosocial support for children into child-friendly spaces and other child protection programming, but they need additional staffing and funding to cover geographical gaps. Adolescents and families should also have access to support for coping with and recovering from the stress and violence they have endured.¹⁵ The needs of the children we spoke with remain immense.

Number of children unaccompanied or separated from their families



¹⁴ Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University, 'Key Concepts: Toxic Stress,' 2014, http://developingchild.harvard.edu/key_concepts/toxic_stress_response/.

¹⁵ Psychosocial support is 'any type of local or outside support that aims to protect or promote psychosocial well-being and potentially prevents the development of mental disorder', Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), *Mental Health and Psychosocial Support: Checklist for Field Use*, Geneva: IASC, 2008.



‘They started firing guns at us’ – Jonathan’s story

One year ago, 10-year-old Jonathan and his family fled their home during a night of violence and took refuge at the United Nations base. ‘They came with big machine guns [and] they started firing guns at us,’ said Jonathan. The family tried to defend themselves and ‘... were very many but sharing only two guns’. Although this deterred the first attackers, Jonathan remembers that they returned the next morning in larger numbers, so the family fled. ‘My father told us that we can go now because we cannot be able to confront them. Then we start walking to UNMISS [United Nations Mission in South Sudan]. On our way to UNMISS we saw many people at the street who have been killed,’ he said.

For the past ten months, he has been living with his family in a site that protects him and the thousands of others who live there from further violence. Their basic needs – shelter, food and water – are provided for by humanitarian organisations. Yet the camp is crowded, and Jonathan is clear about what is important to him.

‘I want to be taken in a very good school. The school in UNMISS is very congested. Sometimes we cannot concentrate on our lesson simply because students were very many in one class,’ he said. Although spaces have been created where children can play and take lessons, Jonathan is right when he says that it is overcrowded.



Jonathan lived in Juba before December 2013. After his home was attacked by armed soldiers, he and his family fled to the United Nations compound where they have been living ever since.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Children that World Vision spoke to live in fear. To ensure a protective and supportive environment until they are able to return home, World Vision calls on donors to:

- Support efforts to strengthen the community-based protective environment for children.
- Provide funding to ensure that mental health and psychosocial support considerations are addressed and mainstreamed in the planning, implementation and monitoring of all humanitarian response activities.¹⁶

“ I don’t feel safe here, if war breaks out outside Juba, there may be killing at the camp gate.”

Michael, age unknown,
Topping Protection of
Civilians site, Juba

AT WORK, NOT IN SCHOOL

Children say displacement has increased the amount of time they work, including in hazardous labour.¹⁷ According to both children and other humanitarian organisations, the disruption of education and loss of family income has led to an increase in child work and child labour.¹⁸ Girls and boys of all ages say they work instead of, or in addition to, going to school in POCs. Boys say they earn money by working outside the home, such as moving goods in wheelbarrows. More than 50 per cent of the boys interviewed in Malakal report working outside the home for 30 to 40 South Sudanese pounds (about US\$7–9.50) a day. Both girls and boys, some as young as 7 years old, say they work in market stalls.¹⁹

Girls in POCs report carrying water for their families. They say they have to walk 10 to 15 minutes to find water, and the 20-litre jerry can is painful to carry. Girls in Malakal report leaving the Protection of Civilian site to retrieve water from the river because there are too few water points. For girls like 12-year-old Marie, not only is carrying 20 litres of water physically harmful, but travelling outside the Protection of Civilian site exposes them to further dangers, such as maiming, abduction and sexual violence.²⁰

“At home, [a] tanker used to bring water; then we take the jerry can to pump water and it was close to the house. Over here, we have to go look for the water.”

Marie, 12, Tamping Protection of Civilians site, Juba

‘They will kill you, if you go back’ – Marie’s story

Marie, 9, lives with her grandmother and great aunt in a camp for people who have been displaced by the violence. They used to live in the town of Malakal, where Marie also used to attend school. Now both school and home are tents.

Marie is reluctant to talk about what happened and why they fled the town. Thousands of Marie’s ethnic group are living in the same camp as Marie and her family. They are separated from other ethnic groups by fences and soldiers. ‘They will kill you if you go back to Malakal,’ she says.

One of the good things that has remained in her life is church. The singing and celebration gives her something to look forward to and makes her happy. Still, she craves all the things she had when she lived at home – simple things like clothes, shoes and a bed.



Marie lived in Malakal before fleeing armed conflict with her aunt and grandmother. She now lives in a United Nations compound, unable to return home.

¹⁷ Worst Forms of Child Labour: (a) all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom, and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict; (b) the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances; (c) the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties; (d) work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.

¹⁸ Key informant interviews, September and October 2014, additional validation South Sudan Child Protection Subcluster, *Upper Nile State Analysis*, March 2014. http://cpwg.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2014/05/SOUTHSUDAN_State_Analysis_UPPER_NILE_MARCH2014.pdf.

¹⁹ Key informant interview, September 2014.

²⁰ Aditi Gorur, September 2014, page 9.

According to children, child labour existed before the outbreak of violence. Many children say that lack of access to school or a shorter school day are the main reasons they are more engaged in work. Children say they were attending school for six hours a day before the crisis, and now they attend school two to three hours a day. Child labour, combined with a lack of access to education, harms children's physical, emotional and mental development and robs children of future opportunities.

While child protection agencies have already made efforts to better understand how conflict and displacement have impacted child labour in South Sudan, a comprehensive assessment would help to gain an in-depth overview of child labour and its underlying causes in the current crisis. Donors should support this effort and expand initiatives that address the root causes of child labour.

World Vision's conversations with children suggest that governments, agencies and communities could help address child labour through making education available to all children and adolescents, and ensuring that there are increased livelihood opportunities for parents and older adolescents. Because of the important role of education in establishing a routine for children, safe, accessible and free education should be available in conflict-affected areas.



A young boy sells bread in a camp for internally displaced people in Malakal, South Sudan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Children say they want to be in school and not working. The worst forms of child labour should be addressed as a critical priority in the humanitarian response. World Vision calls for the following actions:

- The humanitarian community to carry out a comprehensive assessment of child labour practices and underlying causes.
- Donors to fund programmes offering livelihood skills opportunities for parents and older adolescents, including an emphasis on life skills and promoting access to vocational training that corresponds with the current and future needs of the labour market.
- Donors to provide funding for humanitarian organisations to scale up access to protective emergency learning spaces and longer-term education for children and youth affected by the conflict.
- The parties to the conflict to immediately vacate schools and return them to civilian use in accordance with international law.²¹

**CHILDREN
TOLD WORLD
VISION THEIR
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SCHOOL HAS
MORE THAN
HALVED, FROM
SIX TO TWO
OR THREE
HOURS A DAY
BECAUSE OF
CONFLICT**

21 World Vision, May 2014.



A young boy sits on the fence around a makeshift classroom in a Protection of Civilians site in Juba, South Sudan.

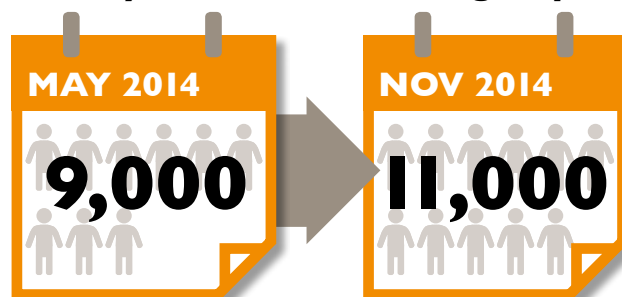
IN DANGER, UNABLE TO GO HOME

Nearly one year after the conflict began, children in South Sudan continue to live at risk of physical harm and violence, including armed recruitment, sexual violence, maiming and injury. Children living in POCs say they leave the sites to scavenge, fetch water and buy food, which makes them vulnerable to physical harm, especially from armed groups.²² Due to continued conflict, children say, they cannot return to the places where they felt safe prior to the crisis: their homes, churches and schools. Children will not feel safe while fighting continues.

Joseph, 6, in Juba says he fears that vehicles will crush him when he leaves the POC site to buy bread for his family. Matthew, 10, says he fears leaving the POC site to buy ice, because of the armed men who levelled his village. He goes out only when his mother threatens to beat him.

Most children say the Protection of Civilians sites offer safety from physical harm. However, they report that there are not enough places to get water, and families rely on outside markets for food variety and other products. While UNMISS has made efforts to increase patrols outside Protection of Civilians sites, implementation has not been systematic, and men, women and children remain vulnerable.²³

Number of children recruited or used by armed forces and groups



UNMISS "Conflict in South Sudan: A Human Rights Report" 8 May 2014

UNICEF, 21 October, SitRep #44

²² Validated by Assessments Capacities Project, 3 May 2014, page 40.

²³ South Sudan Protection Cluster Protection Trends Analysis: South Sudan, October 2014.

<https://southsudan.humanitarianresponse.info/system/files/documents/files/20141030%20Protection%20Trends%20Analysis%20final.pdf>

Children living in POCs express a strong desire to return home but say they cannot due to fear of physical violence, further displacement and loss of their houses.²⁴ In Malakal, children say they want to return home, but armed groups have burned their houses. Regardless of how much children desire to resume their normal routines in familiar, trusted environments, which they describe as walking to church and school and playing in their communities, as long as conflict continues this is something they cannot do – they cannot go home.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Children want peace. They want to be able to return home. Therefore, World Vision calls for the following actions:

- Parties to the conflict to immediately cease hostilities and uphold existing agreements to bring a lasting solution to the crisis.²⁵
- The parties to the conflict to immediately cease all violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, including the grave violations of children's rights, and immediately release to the relevant UN and humanitarian organisations all children under the age of 18 who are involved directly or indirectly with hostilities, and cease further recruitment in accordance with international law.
- The government of the Republic of South Sudan to uphold the Recommitment Agreement for the implementation of the Revised Action Plan to end the recruitment and use of children and other grave violations against children, signed in June 2014, and its operationalisation workplan, endorsed in August 2014.²⁶
- The Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition (SPLM/IO) to uphold its commitment signed in May 2014 to stop the recruitment of children and to protect children from the impact of war.²⁷
- UNMISS to strengthen measures to protect civilians, including preventing, monitoring, reporting and responding to grave violations of children's rights.
- UNMISS to expand the geographic scope of its patrols to improve security for children leaving Protection of Civilian sites, as well as for those living outside the POCs in more remote areas beyond UNMISS bases.

“ If you go outside the Protection of Civilians site to buy bread, okra, or meat, then something might happen to you. You feel afraid; you feel afraid.”

Elizabeth, 15, Juba

24 South Sudan Protection Cluster, October 2014.

25 'Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities', January 2013; Agreement to 'Resolve the Crisis in South Sudan', 9 May, 2014; and 'Protocol on Agreed Principles on Transitional Arrangements Towards Resolution of the Crisis in South Sudan', August 2014.

26 UN Report of the Secretary-General on South Sudan (covering the period from 25 July – 24 September 2014), 30 September 2014.

27 Remarks made by Leila Zerrougui, UN Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict on Government of South Sudan and UN launch 'Children, Not Soldiers' campaign, 29 October 2014, <http://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/remarks-made-leila-zerrougui-srsg-children-and-armed-conflict-government-south>; UN Report of the Secretary-General on South Sudan, 25 July 2014.



A boy plays with a hoop in one of the child-friendly spaces operated by World Vision in Kodok, South Sudan.

HOPES FOR THE FUTURE

“I want to be a teacher.”

Sarah, Helen, Esther, Alex
in Malakal, Topping,
Kodok

“In the future we hope to be in peace.”

Christina, Philip and other
children, Kodok

“I want to get my diploma so that I can be an air force pilot. I want to be able to take my family and fly.”

Theresa, 14, Malakal
POC

“I would change diseases like cholera to make them safe.”

Simon, 10, Juba, Topping
POC

“I want to be the president to bring peace.”

James, age unknown,
Malakal POC

“I want to be an engineer.”

Maria, age
unknown, Malakal POC

“I want to be a driver.”

Arthur, age unknown,
Kodok

“If the war stops and we can go outside and learn.”

Rose, 9, Juba,
Topping POC

“I want to be a pastor.”

Sam, age unknown, Malakal
POC

“I want to be a governor. I want to do construction and fix the roads. I would start with Juba.”

Jonathan, Juba, Topping
POC

“I want to go to school so that I become a better person and in the future do something good for myself and my parents.”

Jenny, 15, Juba, Topping
POC

“I want to be a doctor.”

John, Esther, Nathalie,
Michael in Malakal,
Topping, Kodok

“Everything will be ok in the future.”

Kate, Matthew and other
children, Malakal POC

RECOMMENDATIONS

The children that World Vision spoke to clearly articulated what they want: They want the conflict to end. They want to be able to return home. They want to be protected from harm. They want to be able to go back to school. For this to become a reality, World Vision calls for the following actions:

DONORS

1. Ensure robust funding for education and child protection for the duration of the crisis.
2. Ensure the mainstreaming of child protection in all humanitarian response activities per the Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action.
3. Support efforts to strengthen the community-based protective environment for children.
4. Support efforts to better understand the underlying causes of child labour among children who are internally displaced.
5. Provide funding to ensure that mental health and psychosocial support considerations are addressed and mainstreamed in the planning, implementation and monitoring of all humanitarian response activities.²⁸
6. Provide funding for humanitarian organisations to scale up access to protective emergency learning spaces and longer-term education for children and youth affected by the conflict.
7. Fund programmes offering livelihood skills opportunities for parents and older adolescents, including an emphasis on life skills and promoting access to vocational training that corresponds with the current and future needs of the labour market.

HUMANITARIAN ACTORS

1. Carry out a comprehensive assessment of child labour practices and their underlying causes.
2. Strengthen the community-based protective environment for children.
3. Expand programmes offering livelihood skills opportunities for parents and older adolescents, including an emphasis on life skills and promoting access to vocational training that corresponds with the current and future needs of the labour market.

UNMISS

1. Strengthen measures to protect civilians, including preventing, monitoring, reporting and responding to grave violations of children's rights.
2. Expand the geographic scope of patrols to improve security for children leaving the Protection of Civilian sites, as well as for those living outside the POCs in more remote areas beyond UNMISS bases.

ALL PARTIES TO THE CONFLICT

1. Parties to the conflict to immediately cease hostilities and uphold existing agreements to bring a lasting solution to the crisis.²⁹
2. The parties to the conflict to immediately cease all violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, including the grave violations of children's rights, and immediately release to the relevant UN and humanitarian organisations all children under the age of 18 who are involved directly or indirectly with hostilities, and cease further recruitment in accordance with international law.

3. The government of the Republic of South Sudan to uphold the Recommitment Agreement for the implementation of the Revised Action Plan to end the recruitment and use of children and other grave violations against children, signed in June 2014, and its operationalisation workplan, endorsed in August 2014.³⁰
4. The Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition (SPLM/IO) to uphold its commitment signed in May 2014 to stop the recruitment of children and to protect children from the impact of war.³¹
5. The parties to the conflict to immediately vacate schools and return them to civilian use in accordance with international law.³²
6. Ensure unimpeded access by the humanitarian organisations to children affected by the conflict.

28 World Vision, May 2014.

29 'Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities', January 2013; Agreement to 'Resolve the Crisis in South Sudan', 9 May, 2014; and 'Protocol on Agreed Principles on Transitional Arrangements Towards Resolution of the Crisis in South Sudan', August 2014.

30 UN Report of the Secretary-General on South Sudan (covering the period from 25 July – 24 September 2014), 30 September 2014.

31 Remarks made by Leila Zerrougui, UN Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict on Government of South Sudan and UN launch 'Children, Not Soldiers' campaign, 29 October 2014, <http://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/remarks-made-leila-zerrougui-srsg-children-and-armed-conflict-government-south>; UN Report of the Secretary-General on South Sudan, 25 July 2014.

32 World Vision, May 2014.

CHILD PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

The facilitation team ensured safe and ethical participation of children, adhering to World Vision's child protection protocols. All names have been changed to protect the identity of the children involved, and all photos were taken and are used with informed consent.

ETHICAL AND QUALITY ASSURANCE CONSIDERATIONS

- Publication standards for protection of children: To ensure the safety of the participants, all personal information such as name and contact details were removed from the notes. Child participants are identified only by their gender, age and pseudonym.
- Consent: The research team ensured that participation was voluntary and informed. Children were not offered any kind of compensation for their participation in the research. Consent was acquired from parents or caregivers, making sure they understood the rationale, the type of activities to be conducted and the way the research would be used.
- Ethics: This research followed ethical considerations to ensure that the principles of justice, respect and doing no harm were upheld. Measures were taken to ensure the safety, rights, dignity and well-being of the participants.
- Cultural appropriateness: Children participated in their local language in order to minimise misinterpretations.
- Gender: The project team ensured equitable participation of boys and girls and took into account potential cultural sensitivities.



World Vision staff meet with children in a child-friendly space in Kodok, South Sudan.



World Vision is a Christian relief, development and advocacy organisation dedicated to working with children, families and communities worldwide to reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice. World Vision is dedicated to working with the world's most vulnerable people. World Vision serves all people regardless of religion, race, ethnicity or gender.

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