

Statement by Toby Lanzer, Humanitarian Coordinator in South Sudan

**Humanitarian action essential in Jonglei**

Juba, 6 May 2013: “I am deeply concerned about the humanitarian situation in Jonglei State, where thousands of civilians are in need of assistance and protection, and where humanitarian workers have treated more than 450 casualties, including children, since February. We have seen houses burned down and civilian property destroyed. Facilities such as schools and health centres have been robbed, looted and occupied by armed actors. In the past week, hostilities in Maruwa Hills, Pibor County, forced scores of civilians to flee their homes and aid agencies to relocate their staff.

I urge all parties involved to abide by their obligations under national and international law, ensure that civilians are not caught in the ongoing hostilities, and enable all wounded to access medical care.

People displaced by the hostilities have told us that they would like to return to their homes, especially during the rainy season when many rural areas flood. Agencies have pre-positioned aid across the state and are ready to help people affected by hostilities. We have already managed to reach more than 23,000 people in Akobo County.

Meanwhile in Pibor and Pochalla counties, where needs are likely increase, constraints on the humanitarian response are growing. Our capacity to provide emergency surgery as well as regular medical care has diminished because of insecurity. Shots have been fired at convoys carrying life-saving supplies, and I am deeply concerned about the safety and security of aid workers.

Aid workers have a unique and protected role in assisting the most vulnerable, and I call on all parties in Jonglei to ensure that agencies can carry out their work unhindered and in safety.”

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