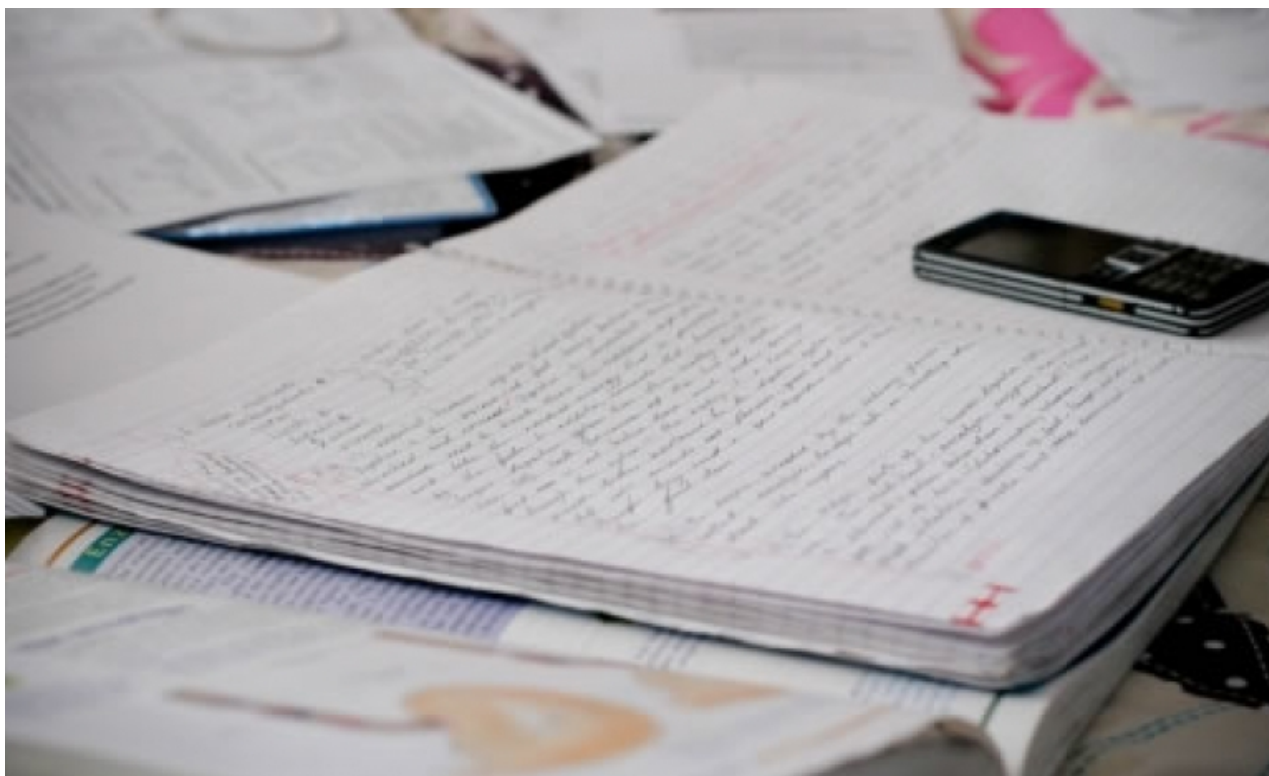


## South Sudan: A senseless war



05/26/2017 - 12:09



We are devastated by the recent turn of events here in South Sudan. Too many people have already lost their lives in this senseless war.

### **Pau Vidal**

Submitted by F Pere Tarrés on Fri, 05/26/2017 - 11:58

**Description:**

Jesuit. Project Director at JRS Maban.

**Vertical photo:**



Square photo:



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We are devastated by the recent turn of events here in South Sudan.

After five long decades of war with the north, South Sudan became independent in 2011. Soon after that, in December 2013, the current conflict, a full scale civil war this is threatening the very existence of the youngest nation in the world.

More than 3.5 million South Sudanese have been displaced which makes it the largest displacement crises of the African continent. Coupled with the economic crisis (inflation rated at more than 800%) this has created a humanitarian crisis in South Sudan of unprecedented proportions.

On the 20th February, the government declared officially that the famine had started in parts of the country. According to the latest UNICEF report "an estimated 5.5 million people in South Sudan (47 % of the population) are projected to be severely short of food at the height of the 2017 lean season between May to July 2017, and over 1.1 million children are estimated to be acutely malnourished this year."

Even though the draught has hit some parts of the country, the famine is man-made mostly caused by the current conflict. Millions of people go hungry and hundreds of thousands are at risks of dying of starvation unless the guns stop. The August 2015 agreements have not born fruit and there is open military confrontation, violence, abuses of human rights in many parts of the country. The heavy presence of light arms and several local militias further complicates any peaceful settlement.

The recent killing of 6 humanitarian workers in March in Pibor-Juba road has brought the total figure of humanitarians killed since the conflict started in December 2013 to a staggering figure of 79. South Sudan is a dangerous place for the humanitarian family at the time their people need them most.

In the midst of all these challenges JRS South Sudan continues investing in education, psychosocial and pastoral activities in Yambio and Maban. They provide education as a protection measure to avoid force conscription and preventing early marriage, but also to prepare the future generation to learn how to settle disputes through dialogue and negotiation rather than violence and arms. They offer psychosocial support in order to help people heal from the wounds of trauma and overcome adversities. There are pastoral activities to celebrate life in the midst of so much death and devastation and proclaim that God has not abandoned God's people.

Our JRS brothers across the border in northern Uganda (Adjumani) and Kenya (Kakuma) are hosting hundreds of thousands of South Sudanese offering them similar services, so that the time in exile is not a wasted time but rather one to imagine and prepare a better future.

In a recent note entitled "A voice cries in the wilderness" the Bishops of South Sudan encouraged all with these words: "We call upon you to remain spiritually strong, and to exercise restraint, tolerance, forgiveness and love. Work for justice and peace; reject violence and revenge. We are with you."

In the same pastoral note they also explained that the Pope wishes to visit South Sudan. We wish that his visit will indeed take place and that the hearts of stone will be softened so that peace and justice can flourish in this beautiful land. Too many people have already lost their lives in this senseless war.

*This article was originally published on [Jesuit Refugee Service blog](http://jesuitrefugeeservice.org). Read more from the author on <http://enpau.blogspot.com/>*

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