



## Chaos in South Sudan

“Back to War”

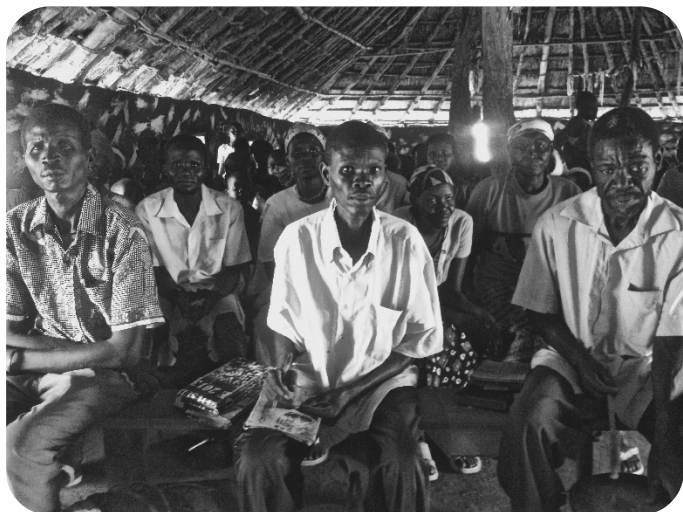
-Col William Gatjiath, SPLA-IO Spokesman

“Committed to Jesus Christ”

-Asiki Dagama, EAM Deputy Director of Water Operations

### “Back to War”

Another season of fighting. Another evacuation. Another broken attempt at peace. Another example of the brokenness of man. South Sudan is a battlefield. A battlefield not only in the military sense, but also in the spiritual sense. We work to bring the glory to Jesus and because we are working for our Lord, not man’s own glory, we are eager to respond with excellence and enthusiasm. Although conflict has returned to South Sudan, EAM is committed to practically demonstrating the love of Jesus in every way possible. We know there is a light at the end of the tunnel. We hold true to Ephesians 6: 11, “Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.” We find our confidence and security in Jesus. Jesus has and continues to direct us in all that we do.



### UPDATE ON SOUTH SUDAN

On July 8<sup>th</sup>, the day before South Sudan was to celebrate its 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary as an independent country, fighting and violence erupted again in the capital city of Juba. The fighting was

between the majority Dinka government forces, known as the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA), and the Sudan People’s Liberation Army- in Opposition (SPLA-IO), supported primarily by the Nuer tribe. The main actors: President Salva Kiir, leader of the SPLA and Vice-President Riek Machar who commands the SPLA-IO; the same two men who vowed peace for their suffering country through an internationally brokered peace agreement in August 2015. The result of the conflict in Juba saw 270+ soldiers and civilians lose their lives. During an interview on July 10<sup>th</sup>, the spokesman for the SPLA-IO stated that, “South Sudan is back to war.”

Since the fighting in Juba, conflict continues to consume South Sudan and has pushed this fragile country to the brink of complete failure. South Sudan has witnessed unspeakable actions and crimes committed against civilians that rest squarely on the leadership of the country and military. A recent report written by [Humanitarian Outcomes](#) and posted on *Reuters* placed South Sudan as the 2<sup>nd</sup> most dangerous place to work for aid organizations, second only to Afghanistan, and stated, “Shootings and assault, including rape, were the most significant type of violence in South Sudan, reflecting the proliferation of small arms in the ethnically driven conflict.”

### EAM’S RESPONSE TO FIGHTING

Due to increased insecurity and fighting EAM moved our field teams back to our base in Kajo Keji, South Sudan. We also moved the students from the Leadership Academy of South Sudan (LASS) from Nimule to a school run by one of our partners in Gulu, Uganda.

We praise God that all of our team members, students, equipment, and bases are safe, but field operations remain a challenge due to insecurity on the roads. Violence and armed robberies have expanded to include previously stable, safe operating areas. These areas, such as Morobo, Yei, Nimule, Magwi, and Kajo Keji, had previously been insulated against the fighting which allowed EAM to serve those in desperate need of water, health, leadership development, and most importantly, the love of Jesus. Since early July, EAM has closely monitored

our areas of operations and the security threats that directly affect our employees and their families. The safety of our team and students is EAM's top priority and we are praying about what's next for EAM if the conflict continues to make the roads insecure.

## LOOKING AHEAD

Currently, our employees are working to secure EAM's compounds in Juba, Kajo Keji, and Nimule in the event of a prolonged civil war. The team is also in the process of repositioning our equipment to safe, secure locations to be able to return to operating in the near future. Due to the lack of safe field operating areas and heavy restrictions on movement, we have temporarily suspended field operations for water and health in South Sudan. We are prayerfully considering next steps and how best to serve in this changing environment.

The students at LASS will continue to attend classes from Gulu, Uganda until it is safe for them to return to the LASS campus in Nimule.

We are praying and assessing how to best work in South Sudan, and evaluating opportunities to serve in northern Uganda. Due to the insecurity in South Sudan, there are nearly a million refugees who have been displaced from their homes. **According to the UN, northern Uganda has received over 100,000 refugees from South Sudan since the beginning of 2016.** The majority of these displaced people are women and children – the ones most at risk to water-borne sicknesses, vulnerable to persistent persecution, and in need of the hope of Jesus more than ever.

## EXAMPLES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AT WORK

Despite the fighting, we still see God at work amidst the chaos. It might be present in a village like Lomiri, where EAM drilled a new borehole in June and had the chance to witness to Betty,



a 22 year old resident and self-described “peasant.” Betty shared with our team part of her story, “My family fetches water from a hand dug well. We greatly lack clean

drinking water, which causes diseases to affect us. **Thank you for truly demonstrating the love of God to us by providing us with clean and abundant water. Thank you for sharing the Gospel of Christ with us. Be blessed.**”

We see hope in Kiden Josephine's story and growth during her two years at LASS. Kiden states, “Based on my location in South Sudan, as one of the war torn countries in Africa, my life has been impacted more positively because it caused me to believe that where there is a problem, someone has to champion out the solution and it is the theme of social entrepreneurs and great thinkers like my fellow classmates at LASS to make this change. I have realized that there is a great role to play in order to make a positive difference in South Sudan and the world in



general and this can only be true when **one practices love which is better than hate, forgiveness which is better than to seek revenge and one should always do for others what he/she expects them to do for him/her** to show that one bears the responsibility to change the direction and mind set of the community though the location remains unchanged. Finally, I developed a view that something must go wrong before men and women of great courage and wisdom champion a positive, reliable and long lasting solution. These are all because of my location in South Sudan. Had I been in a peaceful country then all these ideas would have not been because nothing would be wrong and my mind would be relaxed.”

## CONFIDENCE IN JESUS CHRIST

We know Jesus has a plan for South Sudan. Proverbs 3:5-6 demonstrates what our response to the unknown should be: “Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.” This is our response. This is where we gain confidence and peace about EAM, South Sudan, and those who will be introduced to Jesus in the future.

Even if the different warring parties' think this country belongs to them, we know it belongs to our Creator. Even if the government and rebels have declared that “South Sudan is back to war,” we know this is not a war of military strength, rather a battleground for Jesus and His kingdom. Please stand with us in this time of prayer through the insecurity and consider giving to EAM's mission of good and glory for our Lord.