



# SUDAN RELIEF REVIEW

*Bring the Gospel of Christ, and providing food, clean water, shelter, and medical care, to the people of South Sudan*

## OUTBREAK: South Sudan records 1.6 million severe malaria cases – the worst outburst ever seen in the country



*The current malaria outbreak in South Sudan is unprecedented and shows no signs of letting up. We are committed to helping these poor people combat this deadly disease.*

South Sudan is experiencing an “unprecedented” outbreak of malaria, with many observers stating that this year’s malaria outbreak is the most severe ever seen in the country. According to the United Nations Coordination for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), there have been approximately 1.6 million malaria cases reported so far, with some areas of South Sudan having more than quadrupled their numbers from the same period last year.

Malaria season in South Sudan typically runs from May to December. But the number of patients being treated for *severe cases* has crossed into this year. Figures are not yet available for 2015, but the UN reports that malaria was responsible for 72 percent of the disease-related preventable deaths in South Sudan in 2014. The current outbreak threatens to see the loss of life dramatically increase this year.

A mosquito-born disease, malaria can be categorized as either uncomplicated or severe. Patients with uncomplicated malaria have fever, chills, headaches, sweats, vomiting, body aches and general malaise. They can recover with proper treatment. But *severe malaria* occurs when complications arise as a result of malarial infection and is deadly. It can cause organ failure, impaired brain function and coma. Severe malaria can progress extremely rapidly, causing death in days or even hours.

Why has the current outbreak reached unprecedented levels? The answer is several external factors. A shortage of mosquito nets and medical supplies has resulted in an overall inability to adequately care for patients flooding into health facilities across the country. In particular, the country suffers from an acute shortage of anti-malarial drugs. “We don’t always have drugs for malaria because everything is supplied by the Ministry of Health,” said Matthew Deng, a nurse at the Public Healthcare Clinic in West Aweil County. “The last batch of medication we received was in November, but for this month we haven’t received anything.” He added that his clinic was given 2,000 anti-malarial tablets the government estimated would last a month – but lasted less than a week.

The only alternative for clinicians in these situations is to write a prescription for patients, who then must pay out-of-pocket to obtain the medication at their local pharmacy. While simple anti-malarial medication costs about \$1.25, that modest price is still far more than most South Sudanese can afford to pay. This forces patients to go without the prescribed medication, and they eventually develop severe cases of malaria.

Another factor making the outbreak worse is the shortage of qualified healthcare personnel in the country. Some clinics do not even have trained doctors on staff.

On top of the malaria outbreak, there are other life-threatening problems pummeling this young and fragile country. South Sudan has also suffered outbreaks of cholera and

*continued on Page 2*

### INSIDE

A Message from SRF’s President.....	2
SRF Provides Funding to Complete Construction of Bishop Mazzolari Secondary School.....	3
Bishop Kussala Condemns Rebel Attack on Nuns in Western Equatoria .....	3
Ways You Can Give To Sudan Relief Fund.....	4

measles. And food insecurity remains a fixture. Today, approximately 80 percent of the country's population is facing a critical food shortage, brought on by the civil war, which could lead to mass starvation and death.

At the Sudan Relief Fund, we are doing all we can to combat the malaria outbreak, as well as tackling other health crises impacting our brothers and sisters in Christ in this war-torn nation. We are providing emergency humanitarian aid including mosquito nets, anti-malarial drugs, other medicines and food assistance. If you would like to help, please use the reply form and envelope enclosed with this issue of *Sudan Relief Review* to send any gift you can spare. May God bless you for your love and concern for Christ's children in South Sudan.

## Dr. Tom Catena's brother visits Mother of Mercy Hospital

For Father Paul Catena, it took a trip deep into the heart of Africa to reaffirm what is most important in life.

Father Paul is the pastor of two Catholic parishes in New York State, the Church of the Annunciation in Ilion and Our Lady Queen of Apostles Church in Frankfort. He recently spent two weeks at the Mother of Mercy Hospital in the Nuba Mountains region of South Sudan working along side his brother, Dr. Tom Catena.

It was a journey he had been longing to take for years. So when his brother made a surprise visit home to spend Thanksgiving with their parents, Father Paul seized the opportunity to accompany him on his return to Africa.

"It was a very long trip," said Father Paul, who left the U.S. on a Monday morning and didn't get to his destination until Thursday night. "The first half you fly about seven hours to Europe and then take another eight hour flight to Nairobi. From there we took a four-hour cargo flight to a refugee camp in South Sudan and then hopped into a Land Rover and took a dirt road for about seven hours to where the hospital is."

Upon arrival, Father Paul was welcomed with a "moving and heart-warming" ceremony where the locals showered him with gifts such as beaded necklaces and bracelets. During his stay, Father Paul assisted Dr. Tom on a number of medical procedures. Among these were a

continued on Page 3

# A MESSAGE FROM NEIL CORKERY

## PRESIDENT OF THE SUDAN RELIEF FUND

Dear Friend in Christ,

Every day brings more evidence of the growing violence in South Sudan.

For example, the fighting in Western Equatoria has grown so fierce that UNHCR (the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) and other humanitarian agencies started pulling out at the end of January.

UNHCR said it was leaving because it could no longer guarantee the safety of its staff, but would return if the security situation improves.

Tragically, no one expects that to happen any time soon.

And, as you know, humanitarian groups have been fleeing South Sudan due to violence for some time now. So much so, that the Catholic Church is now the only group of any significance providing God's children here with food, medicine and other essential services they need to survive.

Because the Sudan Relief Fund supports many Church aid projects, our role in this ravaged nation has become more important than ever. And I hope you won't mind if I ask that you send a prayerful gift to us today. With God's grace, you can help save these people at a moment when they have no one else to turn to.

Yours in faith,



Neil Corkery  
President

leg amputation and removal of a goiter. He also spent time visiting churches in the area and speaking with local Sudanese.

It was those conversations with the people who had embraced him so lovingly that he said had the most profound effect on him.

"We went to visit one family who had a member who had been away for three years, and when she returned, her sister walked for three hours to see her," he said. "She couldn't stay long since she had nine kids at home to take care of, so she had to walk right back home another three hours."



*Father Paul Catena, brother of Dr. Tom, recently spent two weeks at the Mother of Mercy Hospital, which is supported by gifts to the Sudan Relief Fund.*

Father Paul added: "It was a real eye-opener on what's really important in life. Here in the western world we are so focused on time and efficiency that we often lose sight of that."

## SRF provides funding for secondary school in Diocese of Rumbek

The Bishop Mazzolari Memorial Secondary School (BMMSS) opened its doors in 2014, named after Bishop Caesar Mazzolari, who died in 2011. The school is in the Diocese of Rumbek in the heart of South Sudan. Created by Diocesan Coordinator Rev. Fr. John Mathiang, it serves the huge number of primary school graduates in the area.

The main goal of BMMSS is the development of the intellectual, spiritual and human formation of the next generation of young boys and girls in the region. The school receives support from the Diocese of Rumbek along with contributions from the local community. Initial funds were raised for the construction of three classrooms and the partial construction of another three classrooms.

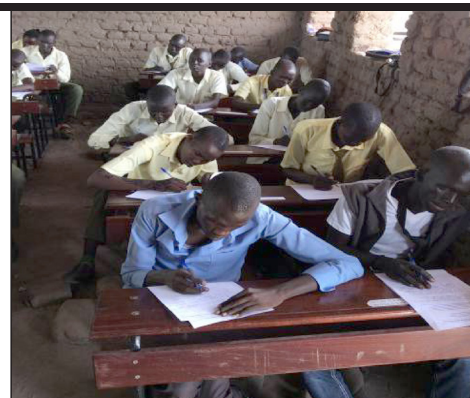
But the Diocese needed help completing the unfinished classrooms. They needed funds to pay for plastering the walls, fixing doors and windows, and cementing the floor. They also needed funds to rehabilitate cracks in the existing sanitary facilities, construct good drainage systems, and separate and paint the existing washrooms for both teachers and students. And the Diocese required financial assistance to provide proper furniture in the classrooms, the staff office and the student's laboratory.

Once this new construction is completed, the promised benefits would be substantial:

- The quality of education will greatly improve for the growing number of children in the Diocesan schools.
- Many more children will have a chance to complete their secondary education and continue with the further studies needed to pursue a professional career.
- Many more girls in particular will be encouraged successfully complete their secondary school education.

For these reasons, the Sudan Relief Fund is providing the Diocese of Rumbek with the funding necessary to complete the construction of the Bishop Mazzolari Memorial Secondary School. We are mindful the UN finds that more than half of all children in South Sudan are not attending school, the highest proportion in any country.

This must change before South Sudan can grow and prosper. Through worthy education projects like those in Rumbek, we can help train the next generation of young people needed to improve the socio-economic status of the people in this developing country.



*SRF funding will pay to plaster classroom walls exposed to the elements, like the one seen here.*

### Some Additional Projects SRF Funds:

- New stock of sacred vestments, vessels and crosses for priests and seminarians in 12 parishes in the Catholic Diocese of Tombura-Yambio
- Three Toyota Land Cruisers for pastoral work throughout Tombura-Yambio
- Completion of construction of 7 Catholic chapels in Western Equatoria State
- Translation and publication of Bibles, Hymnals and Sunday Missals in local Zande language

*And many more than space permits!*

## Bishop Kussala condemns attack on nuns in Yambio

Five armed men, believed allies of a rebel group, assaulted and threatened religious sisters at the Solidarity Teacher Training College in Yambio, the capital of the country's Western Equatoria State last December 28.

Bishop Edward Hiiboro Kussala of Tombura-Yambio said the attack has shaken and saddened the Catholic Church. Bishop Kussala lamented that violence and fear-mongering seem "rampant in both Church and society" in South Sudan.

After climbing the fence surrounding the college, the men confronted the nuns, who were locking up the building for the night, and demanded guns, cash, phones and computers. The nuns handed over the items and the men drove away in two cars. They also raped one of the nuns and physically beat some of the others. It was all very traumatic, but thankfully there were no casualties.

Bishop Kussala cited the attack on the nuns as a reason for people of faith to demand their political representatives implement the latest peace accord to end the civil war. He said the "senseless violence" must stop.

Noting that "our communities are disrupted and lives are fractured by such violence," Bishop Kussala said he prays that people "will reach out to one another with the love of God and with a voice that inspires justice, courage and peace."

Bishop Kussala added, "Not a day seems to go by without a news story that sends shivers down my spine." He then stressed that the massive task of ending the violence should not cause people to give up in despair. People of goodwill must do all they can for peace. "We are called more than ever to be witnesses of hope," he said.



# PLANNED GIVING, LEGACY GIFTS, BEQUESTS, WILLS & ESTATE DONATIONS

*Please consider remembering Sudan Relief Fund in your estate planning.*



Planned giving or legacy gifts are one of the most generous ways you can help the desperately poor people of South Sudan. At Sudan Relief Fund we are blessed to have the most generous donors in the world. Please consult your investment advisor, accountant or lawyer for details on remembering Sudan Relief Fund.

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## YOUR MOST CONVENIENT WAY TO HELP THE POOR OF SOUTH SUDAN . . .

*Monthly giving to Sudan Relief Fund couldn't be easier. You can make a tax-deductible gift every month by an automatic draft from your checking account or credit card. And because it's done automatically on the same day every month, it's convenient and requires no extra effort on your part. Plus you have total control: you decide how much you want to donate -- and you can stop making monthly donations at any time.*

*Every dollar makes a difference. To sign up for monthly giving to Sudan Relief Fund simply check the box on the included reply coupon, indicate the amount of your monthly gift and mail it back to us in the postage-paid envelope enclosed. Thank you.*



## SUDAN RELIEF FUND

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YOUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT ENABLES US TO GO FORTH AND REMAIN IN COUNTLESS PLACES IN SUDAN TO BRING HELP,  
HOPE AND CHRIST'S LOVE.

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