



SUDAN RELIEF REVIEW

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

Amid chaos, youth of South Sudan find hope in schools built by the generosity of donors to the Sudan Relief Fund

2017 tragically began much the same way 2016 ended. War and chaos continue to reign and dominate the lives of the suffering people of South Sudan.

“When my country gained independence in 2011,” says Bishop Eduardo Kussala, “hopes were high that we would be free from decades of bloodshed. Instead, renewed violence brought on by civil war has left our country shaken, saddened and confused.”

But there is a reason to be confident about the future despite the mayhem.

What is it? It’s the hope that lies in the hearts of the young people who want peace. They want the opportunity to attend school, to graduate and find work so they can support their families and see their country thrive.

In times of conflict and crisis, education is critical.

Bishop Kussala explains that South Sudan faces enormous challenges, including a struggling education system ranking among the worst in the world. More than 70% of children aged 6–17 years old **have never set foot in a classroom** due to violence and conflict.

Among the biggest issues impacting the country’s education system are overcrowding, a lack of educational materials and no money to pay salaries for well-trained teachers. Even worse is the terrible, ongoing war. When violence disrupts schools, students don’t come to class. These children are traumatized and hurting emotionally and physically.

For these reasons and more, the Sudan Relief Fund is committed to investing in the next generation of South Sudanese — giving them the education they need to reach their full potential and live normal lives.



Sudan Relief Fund built St. Mary’s Primary School, the most successful school in the Catholic Diocese of Tombura-Yambio.

Because of the generosity of our donors, hundreds of children now have an opportunity to receive a safe education and get the vital skills and knowledge needed to flourish and to spread peace.

For example, thanks to our generous donors we recently helped build and continue to sustain the most successful school in the Catholic Diocese of Tombura-Yambio, **St. Mary’s Primary School**. This school is a blessing to families in the diocese and to the orphans from The Congregation of Christian Brothers’ Star Support Group and The Saint Bakhita Orphanage. These poor orphans are only able to attend St. Mary’s through scholarships funded by donations.

The success of St. Mary’s has been wonderful but also overwhelming. The school currently has nearly 900 students, and overcrowding is already a major problem. It will get even worse with enrollment expected to increase. Each classroom was built for 40 children, yet many classes are already holding double that number!

With the continued support of our generous donors, Sudan Relief Fund is planning to fund the expansion of two new classroom buildings to ease the overcrowding problem. We also need more support to provide the

children with proper clothing and clean drinking water which is often difficult to get safely in the Tombura-Yambio region.

Another success on the education front is the **Saint Jeanne Antide Kindergarten**, funded thanks to the generosity of donors to Sudan Relief Fund and completed last December. This new kindergarten provides a safe haven for youngsters to grow in Christ’s love and learn the fundamentals for a bright future.

But, as is the case with St. Mary’s Primary School, the Saint Jeanne Antide Kindergarten urgently needs expansion. The demand is so high that we already need to construct two additional classroom buildings to accommodate all the students. Remember, this kindergarten just opened in December!

As you can see, the suffering people of South Sudan are crying out for educational opportunity. They know a quality education

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SRF's most recent successfully funded educational effort is Saint Jeanne Antide Kindergarten, which was completed in December 2016.

lays the foundation from which the next generation of youth can lead this war-torn nation to a future of peace and prosperity.

If you would like to continue to help the children of South Sudan, as well as continue our other lifesaving work in South Sudan, please use the reply form and envelope enclosed with this issue of *Sudan Relief Review*. Your gift will be an important investment in building a peaceful society through education.

Women living with HIV/AIDS graduate seamstress training in Yambio

The widespread insecurity and terror in South Sudan have left the people traumatized. Many innocent lives have been lost, with many more forced from their homes. Violence and looting have also crippled economic growth in the country and the ability to earn a living.

Amid such horror, we still see victories that make our work worthwhile. One such victory is happening in Yambio.

Sudan Relief Fund provides funding for The Congregation of Christian Brothers' Star Support Group — a project that offers psychological care and support for people living with HIV/AIDS. The Star Support Group recently held a graduation ceremony for 25 women who spent the past two years learning skills to mend and alter clothes. These skills will allow the women to work as seamstresses and earn income for themselves and their families.

The women were all awarded with diplomas, as well as a sewing machine,

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A MESSAGE FROM NEIL CORKERY

PRESIDENT OF THE SUDAN RELIEF FUND

Dear Friend in Christ,

According to a three-member United Nations commission on human rights, South Sudan is "on the brink of catastrophe."

In fact, this UN commission recently warned of a repeat of the Rwandan **genocide**. And it could happen!

You see, we at the Sudan Relief Fund know of ethnic cleansing underway in several areas of South Sudan threatened by starvation, gang rape and the burning of villages.

The violence has even spread to previously peaceful regions such as Central Equatoria. The atrocities, the ethnic hatreds, and the scale of rape of young girls and women are heartbreaking and mind-boggling.

But how has the world responded to this alarming UN report? Mostly with indifference, even though another report from the Council on Foreign Relations **also warns of genocide** in South Sudan.

That's why I thank the Almighty for your generous support. Your sacrificial gifts show you aren't indifferent to the plight of God's children in South Sudan.

You've helped us bring them food and water, given them shelter and medical care, and provided schooling for the children. Most of all, you inspire them to believe peace can come through Christ.

But with this forlorn country now on the brink of genocide, please help us again today. PLEASE send any gift -- large or small -- to SRF immediately. Thank you and God bless you for caring about these poor people as the world looks the other way.

Yours in faith,

Neil Corkery
President

during the ceremony — which were graciously received in what can only be described as a moment of great joy for them.

The chief guest of honor was the National Minister of Education. During his address, he congratulated the women and expressed appreciation for the work of all who make the Star Support Group possible. The Minister also promised to publicize the work on a national level.

Star Support Group is recognized as one of the most effective projects at lifting people out of poverty. It empowers people infected with HIV/AIDS to live with self-worth, showing that those living with this deadly disease can still be productive members of society. Star Support Group also promotes social welfare, empowerment for women and girls, child protection, economic growth, and greater disease awareness.

The four Christian Brothers who manage Star Support Group also take care of sick orphans infected with HIV/AIDS. And SRF provides scholarships for all these orphans — thanks to our generous supporters — to attend St. Mary's Primary School (see page 1 for more on how SRF supporters helped build St. Mary's).

By funding life-changing projects like the Star Support Group, Sudan Relief Fund and our donors are working to eventually end poverty in this young nation. We have a long way to go. Yet with God's blessing, we can help even the most marginalized people inspire all of us with their dignity.



Seamstress graduates proudly display their diplomas during ceremony in Yambio.

SRF funds relief efforts as violence comes to Riimenze

Riimenze is a community in South Sudan's Western Equatoria State. Last August the situation there was positive. But today, Riimenze is engulfed by the same chaos threatening the rest of this young country.

Innocent civilians suffer the worst. Their lives have been decimated by a civil war they never wanted. The local people were forced to flee their homes due to the violence. Most of the empty dwellings left behind were looted and vandalized. But the people of Riimenze are resilient.

They desperately want to return to their homes to rebuild and carry on their tradition of subsistence agriculture. This could happen, if only the warring factions would leave them in peace.

"Solidarity with South Sudan," an organization combining the efforts of Catholic congregations, has responded with emergency humanitarian aid. Sudan Relief Fund enthusiastically provides financial support to Solidarity.

"Significantly for us, neither the rebels nor the government soldiers have threatened us," says Brother Bill Firman, executive director of Solidarity. "Indeed, they have made it explicitly clear they appreciate what we are doing and neither our missionary personnel nor our large farm, including the animals, have been touched."

That's the good news. The bad news is how much innocent civilians have suffered over the past few months.

"I lived happily in Riimenze for more than two years and know personally many of these people," Brother Bill says. "It is so sad to see this suffering imposed upon them."

One visitor to Riimenze in mid-January was moved to write:

"I do not have words to describe what we saw and witnessed. How this could happen in South Sudan is beyond me. [Earlier this year] I went to the village and saw about 1,000 people camped around the church compound under the mango trees. Some had large tarps strung up and others had makeshift structures that did not look in any way permanent.

"Today, there are more than 4,000 people around that compound! The structures begin from the side of the Solidarity fence at the left side of the church and stretch behind the church across the area under the mango trees to the priest's small compound.

"We bought all the tarps available in Yambio, but there are not enough for the families in Riimenze. The nights are now cold and people are suffering.

"As people arrive they register at the church. They are sent to different areas with their own villagers. Leaders care for their groups. There is a shortage of water. It is shocking to see the people having to resort to living like this.

"Anyone found outside of the restricted area may be killed. They 'must be a rebel or supporter' if they are not at the church. A couple of the young men told me they had never witnessed anything as bad as this before. They are horrified ...

"No one knows what to do. While we were there some soldiers came. Apparently the soldiers come anytime they want and do what they want: loot, destroy, kill animals and beat up people... The government is unable to help. It is as if the people are not being considered at all. No one cares. It is horrible ..."

Fear is rampant at the IDP (Internally Displaced Persons) camp housing these poor people. There is constant worry the camp might burn down. Why? Because most of the shelters are made from palm leaves, and they are crowded too close to each other. People are cooking nearby, and the structures could easily catch fire — any blaze would spread quickly.

The tragedy is that, unlike many in the IDP camps in places like Juba, the people of Riimenze have homes and property they can return to. They simply want to go back home and live in peace. Through our support of Solidarity with South Sudan, SRF is working to achieve that goal.



Most residents of Riimenze owned property and supported themselves. And now they've lost everything because of a civil war they never wanted.

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.

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.



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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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