



A MESSAGE FROM NEIL CORKERY PRESIDENT OF THE SUDAN RELIEF FUND

Dear Friend in Christ,

Even under the best of circumstances, getting a truck loaded heavy with medicine, medical supplies, and construction supplies to Mother of Mercy Hospital in the Nuba Mountains is difficult. We work with partners and suppliers in Nairobi to collect what is needed, then our team makes the trek to Juba, the capital of South Sudan. Given the state of roads in the region and lack of security, just getting to Juba can be a heroic act.

Then it is, if we're lucky, 30 more hours of driving until we see Dr. Tom Catena at the Mother of Mercy Hospital in the Nuba Mountains. Lately, we haven't been so lucky: the rainy season lasted two months longer than usual, so the roads were impassable. We received word recently, though, that the rain was letting up and the roads would soon be clear, so our team should have arrived by the time this newsletter is mailed.

How our partners manage to do it time and again is amazing to me. Then again, much of what happens with Sudan Relief Fund's wonderful team and our dedicated partners is amazing.

And I want to be clear, you are counted among our partners. Your continuing generosity is the only reason there is a truck full of supplies in the first place.

Your generosity is also why, despite the desperate and often dangerous state of South Sudan, the Blue Sisters continue to serve the sixty orphans at Bakhita Orphanage in Yambio. Now, thanks to you, they are expanding facilities, including a functioning kitchen and a sanitary latrine addition.

This is also why Brother Frederick's Star Support Group is able to not only bring care to many suffering with HIV, but even to help them to get on an economically sustainable path by learning the trade of clothes making.

News outlets just reported that a new coalition government has formed between the rival factions. We pray that it holds, and that the government can bring greater security and stability to a people who deserve to live lives of hope and promise. I'd be grateful if you could join us in this prayer.

Indeed, I am deeply grateful for all you do for Sudan Relief Fund, our partners, and those served. Thank you and God bless you.

Yours in faith,
Neil Corkery, President



SUDAN RELIEF FUND

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SUDAN RELIEF REVIEW

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

Medicine Finally to Arrive at Hospital

At their best, many roads in South Sudan and the surrounding nations are barely passable. Where there aren't ruts, potholes, and debris of all kinds, there can be crevasses and even craters left from bombs and landmines after years of war.

And this is what they're like when the weather is accommodating. For a significant part of the year, many of the roads are either completely washed out or thick with mud that can trap even the most able trucks.

A lack of adequate infrastructure is one of many serious problems inhibiting South Sudan's development. Another is the lack of security—even if you can get by on some roads, there is a fair chance you'll be stopped by gangs or militia who demand payment to let you proceed.

All of this is normal in a land ravaged by war and kept in misery by intractable political disfunction. Yet, Sudan Relief Fund and our partners are used to finding ways to get aid where it is most needed.

But when the 2019 rainy season lasted two months longer than usual, Sudan Relief Fund's planned delivery of medicine had to be postponed.

Thankfully, the rains have abated and most of the roads have again become passable for the large truck that will bring the much-needed medicine and supplies from Juba to Mother of Mercy Hospital, about a 30-hour journey.

Your life-saving gifts to Sudan Relief Fund make this possible. The elements may not cooperate, but SRF and our partners are used to making the most of difficult situations.

"We are really struggling to get by, but it's something we're used to," said Dr. Tom Catena, M.D., a surgeon who directs the hospital and serves hundreds of patients



daily. "So it was good news to hear that the truck had arrived in Juba from Nairobi."

By the time you are reading this mailing, the truck should be on its way to the Nuba Mountains with medicine, surgical supplies, and building supplies for the expanding hospital.

"The greatest needs we have are for medicine to cure malaria and dysentery, and for all the supplies required for a safe, sterile surgical theater," said Dr. Tom.

"We see many serious injuries each week, from children missing limbs due to landmines, to complications during delivery, to gunshot wounds and hydrocephaly. We often have 400 patients per day receiving treatment, so we don't have time to scrounge for supplies and we can't perform surgeries in an unsafe environment."

The medicine and supplies provided by Sudan Relief Fund, funded by you and the rest of our generous supporters, are making a difference.

"Lives are definitely being saved every day," said SRF president Neil Corkery. "We don't control the elements, but we're making the best

of a difficult situation and will get the truck to Mother of Mercy any day now, God willing."

Prayers are desperately needed for the safety of all involved. Driving large trucks over uncertain roads is enough of a challenge. Yet, even when the elements don't stop deliveries, the complete lack of security always looms over such logistical efforts.

"We really have to move forward in faith. We've been blessed that our deliveries have been getting through where many other aid agencies have pulled out. Our donors' generosity is reaching those we serve, and we pray constantly for the safety and creativity of all involved," added Corkery.

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Protecting Orphans

Last quarter, we reported on several exciting projects that you and other supporters of Sudan Relief Fund have made possible. Among these was the St. Bakhita Orphanage, home to 60 orphans and 5 caretakers, and a project of the Diocese of Tombura-Yambio.

With the diocese's support, the Bakhita Primary School near the diocesan offices in Yambio is preparing to open as well. Both the orphanage and the school are run by Sister Bianca, who founded the school, and her fellow "Blue Sisters," the Missionary Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The new, large classroom, dormitory, and kitchen are mostly complete, and St. Bianca and her team are setting in place plans to make sure that when the school and kitchen open, they orphans will have uniforms, shoes, and supplies, and that the kitchen will be well-stocked.

This is obviously a great blessing to the orphans and the sisters, but what is most remarkable is that the expansion is happening at all.

You see, the Bakhita orphanage is in Yambio, the largest city in Southwest South Sudan, an area that has been particularly hard-hit by the civil war and power struggles, as well as the ongoing insecurity and hunger. There are little or no social services in the area. Roads are in a terrible state of repair, and schools are dilapidated. There is almost no economy to speak of, and due to the inability to establish security and infrastructure, most people depend on church and humanitarian organizations for food, medication, and many basic needs.

In fact, Sudan Relief Fund is one of

the few agencies left in the area due to the lack of security and difficulty in operating in the war-torn country. Your generosity makes it possible for us to save lives when others have left.

The entire country of South Sudan faces many human development challenges. Only 27% of the population aged 15 years and above is literate, and within this statistic lie significant gender disparities: the literacy rate for males is 40% and 16% for females. The infant mortality rate is 105 per 1,000 live births, which is second highest in the world according to the CIA. Maternal



mortality rate is 789 per 100,000 live births, according to the United Nations, and only 17% of children are fully immunized.

The national government is very fragile as factions continue to battle in different regions around South Sudan and the government cannot provide any security.

With all of this as a backdrop, the growth of one small orphanage and school seems both small and miraculous. To be sure, Sr. Bianca is expected to do much with very little, and

the orphanage is often not in the best shape.

But you and the Blue Sisters have not only aided with the construction of the additional facilities. You keep rice and beans in the kitchen, medicine in a modest dispensary, and you're helping to build updated latrine facilities and a solar power system.

Your support has even contributed to the orphans having uniforms that, according to Sr. Bianca and the staff of the school and orphanage, help add a note of purpose and self-respect to the work the children are doing.

After the lives they've had even at so young an age, we want them to have a safe home and as many advantages as possible. It's the least we can do.

Sudan Relief Fund also began partnering in 2018 with the St. Claire Orphanage in Juba, the capital of South Sudan. Run by a Franciscan order, the orphanage is home to dozens of children whose parents have been lost to war, hunger, and disease. We will be reporting more from the St. Claire orphanage in the future.

"As much as I would have loved to be there to celebrate with our friends and partners, what's important is that the expanded facility is open and is already saving lives. The celebration can wait. We're overjoyed to see this project come to fruition," said Corkery.

The new and expanded facilities were an answer to prayers, made possible by you and other selfless donors to Sudan Relief Fund!

With one of the world's highest infant

Serving Those Who Live with HIV

The third born of seven children, Fredrick Otieno showed early on that he was a leader. At his primary school in Kenya, he led the school chapter of the Young Catholic Society. He continued this servant leadership through secondary (high) school and even became a Mass server at the Cathedral. Fredrick was approached by different religious groups looking for vocations, but felt most clearly called by the mission of the Christian Brothers.

Since taking his initial vows in 2008, Brother Fredrick has never looked back. For the last twelve years, he has been striving to mirror the discipleship of Jesus as a Christian Brother, responding to God's call to serve the people at the margins. This discipleship has brought him to serve in the Diocese of Tombura-Yambio, where oversees a number of worthy projects, including the Star Support Group (SSG), which provides wholistic care and support to people living with HIV/AIDS and the families.

People suffering from HIV/AIDS need dedicated care because, due to their weakened immune systems, they are more vulnerable to infection. Brother Fredrick and his SSG team have opened a dispensary for anti-retroviral and prophylaxis drugs, and they provide education on health, nutrition, hygiene, and sanitation. They also offer testing and counseling services, and in the last year they have provided 750 clients with free drugs and other services.

Of course, for those suffering with HIV, it's not just about surviving, it's about living. The Star Support Group team has developed an innovative one-year course in tailoring and clothes-making. Bringing together microfinance resources and teachers,

mortality rates, South Sudan has dreadfully few hospitals and medical clinics. St. Theresa Hospital is the closest such facility for some 300,000 people in the Diocese of Tobura-Yambio and the surrounding region. People—mostly women and children—come from as far away as the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic to seek healing.

Among the new features of the hospital is a blood bank—something that is essential for the



Brother Edward and his partners have brought 20 HIV-positive SSG members through a course that gives them a trade, allowing them to provide for their own economic well-being and that of their families. They are learning how to make clothes for men and women, how to repair sewing machine if it breaks down, and how to measure a person for a fitting.

In another ambitious project, 367 primary and secondary school students received tuition assistance in an effort to reduce illiteracy among the orphans served by the SSG project. **With the support provided by Sudan Relief Fund's supporters, they have seen a jump in school attendance and academic performance, as well as improved student health.**

Microfinance also plays a role at the school as the SSG officer in charge not only sees that fees are paid, but he keeps up with students to make sure they are participating and that they get the attention they need at school. All of the food support SRF provides goes to the families and caregivers of the students.

new surgical unit. Among its priorities is setting up a blood donation program so that those seeking healing will not necessarily need a relative or blood-matched donor before beginning the procedure.

Thanks to selfless Sudan Relief Fund donors like you and Martin, lives are already being saved and hope is beginning to return to the mothers and children of South Sudan.

The hospital staff and volunteers will

The region around Yambio, South Sudan, is profoundly underdeveloped as people struggle to survive amidst hunger, lack of access to clean water and basic human services, and ongoing violence. Yet, leaders like Brother Edward not only want to care for people where they are, they want to leave those they serve on a sustainable path, with a sense of personal responsibility.

"My goal as the director of the SSG project is to restore the dignity of the marginalized person. At times, this means taking a client to the hospital for treatment when he is at the point of death. When they recover, I am filled with joy! At times the work is about helping them live an independent life with sustainable work," said Brother Edward.

The Star Support Group is seeing such successes not only because of Brother Fredrick and his team, but because you give so generously to Sudan Relief Fund. We could not do this life-saving and dignity-restoring work without you!

focus on improving maternal care in a region unfortunately known for having sky-high maternal mortality rates. Expanded and improved facilities like those at St. Theresa are sorely needed and gratefully welcomed by the surrounding communities.

With your continued support, Sudan Relief Fund will make sure that St. Theresa Hospital stays open—saving the lives of children and young mothers.



New Surgery Center and Maternity Ward Open

After more than a year of preparations and construction, St. Theresa Hospital's new surgical operating theatre and maternity ward officially opened this year. Bishop Eduardo Kussala and SRF President Neil Corkery were slated to be a part of the opening ceremony, but due to restrictions on travel put in place in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Comboni missionaries decided to simply open the facility and begin welcoming patients.