

South Sudan: escalation of violence on unprecedented scale, says relief agency

Médecins Sans Frontières says 'massive' numbers affected, while UN aid agency calls for \$1.27bn to help 3.2 million people

...South Sudan's recent violence has [destroyed many town markets](#) and, Lanzer says, up to 5,000 tonnes of food and other aid has been stolen during the instability. Where the security situation has been most precarious, it has been difficult for agencies such as the World Food Programme (WFP) to move as much food aid as they want by land and instead it is having to be delivered by air. In Malakal, some civilians raided a warehouse storing aid before agencies were able to organise distribution. Tens of thousands of people have reportedly fled from violence across the city. Most of those displaced are thought to be being hosted by residents in less insecure areas.



A rocket fired by government forces soars over a burning hut in Mathiang, Jonglei. Photograph: George Philipas/Reuters

Last week in Unity State MSF staff based in Leer were forced to flee into the bush fearing for their safety. "We have sporadic contact rather than regular communication with our staff who are split into groups in the bush. We know that one group has taken patients with them from the hospital," said Lockyear.

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"We have experienced a number of lootings to our facilities. What we require of all parties is respect for our medical and health aid facilities and unimpeded access, and 90% of our staff are local staff. In Leer they've all fled and therefore the basis for our operation there needs rebuilding. We do have a strong position but due to the insecurity, we have to rebuild. We need a guarantee from all sides for safe access."

According to the WFP's South Sudan director, Chris Nikoi, the agency has suffered setbacks while trying to help those in acute need of food. "Three of our offices have been looted, completely ransacked and we've lost thousands of tons of food stocks," he said. "But even in those places – Bor, Bentiu and Malakal – we are still managing to carry out food distributions and have provided food for more than 200,000 people throughout the country since the crisis began. We're doing what we can to protect existing stocks and planning to scale up to reach more than 1 million people."

