

Number of refugees fleeing violence in South Sudan reaches a new high of four million

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The number of people fleeing barbaric violence in South Sudan, internally displaced or leaving the country, is now over 4 million according to recent figures published by the UN.

As a measure of the severity of the crisis, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reports that on average 1,800 South Sudanese have arrived in Uganda every day over the past twelve months, desperately fleeing the destruction caused by the civil war in their country.

The new high of 4 million internally and externally displaced since the civil war began in 2013 parallels the situation in Syria, where 11 million have been externally and internally displaced by civil war, making the overall refugee crisis worldwide the largest and most dire since World War II.

Uganda, which shares its northern border with South Sudan, is host to the greatest number of refugees, with over one million currently residing in the country. Another one million have fled to countries in the surrounding region, scattering across Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Two million more remain internally displaced in South Sudan, either homeless or residing in squalid and overcrowded conditions in multiple makeshift camps set up by the UN around the country.

During a June visit to the largest refugee camp in the country at Bentiu, Filippo Grandi, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, spoke of the misery experienced by the displaced, "The international neglect that you see here is matched nowhere else in the world. Wherever you look there are dead ends."

The UN agency says it has a shortfall in funding, and is operating on around 20 percent of what it says is necessary to deal with the horrific refugee emergency

in South Sudan.

The conditions confronting South Sudan's population are breathtakingly horrific, and have taken a heavy toll.

The destruction wrought by nearly five years of civil war has resulted in an outbreak of cholera ravaging the country.

Infrastructure, including hospitals, clinics, schools, and sanitary water facilities have been demolished, and entire villages and municipalities have been razed. This has left millions afflicted or susceptible to disease, and has led to a lack of access to critical life-saving medical services.

More than 50,000 have been killed, and many thousands more have been injured and maimed since the beginning of the conflict.

Rapes, mutilation, and torture are a common occurrence, with the conflict taking on an ethnic dimension, as militants belonging to one tribal clan have been encouraged by militia leaders to target their perceived rivals in another.

Stalking the crisis like a dark cloud is the historic famine sweeping the continent with South Sudan directly in its path, with the potential to exacerbate the already catastrophic situation to a new level of deprivation for the masses. According to the UN, more than 100,000 are in immediate danger of starvation, and the famine is estimated to affect 4.9 million men, women and children, 40 percent of the country's total population.

According to UNHCR, the surge of refugees flowing into countries of the surrounding region threatens to severely impact the host country's ability to cope with such a mass exodus. It is estimated that the funding necessary in the short term is around \$1 billion, with much more projected in the future.

The dire consequences of the criminally underfunded

budget available to cope with the refugee emergency has been exposed in Uganda. The large numbers fleeing from South Sudan to Uganda are putting a strain on Kampala's ability to deliver critical health care and adequate education, with many left deprived of medical services due to overcrowded hospitals and classrooms.

The dire situation in South Sudan is a crime for which responsibility can be traced back to Washington, D.C. and its subservient partner governments in Europe.

In 2005, after over two decades of civil war between the government of Sudan and rebel militants in the south, the Bush administration together with its European partners successfully negotiated a peace agreement between the principals of the conflict, the Al-Bashir government in Khartoum and the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), the gang of separatist militants in the south which sought independence from Khartoum.

The main component of the agreement for bringing an end to the conflict was a clause agreed to by both parties that called for the creation of an independent South Sudan, which after six years saw its realization in 2011.

For its part, Washington worked to carve out the new nation state as part of its East Africa strategy, which consisted of isolating the Al-Bashir regime in Khartoum, which is perceived as an obstacle for Washington's hegemonic aims for the region. Secondly, but of greater importance, the US sought to neutralize the substantial economic influence of China in Sudan where Beijing has overseen massive investment in the development of oil resources and extraction infrastructure.

Making clear Washington's aims in South Sudan is the fact that after its creation, Khartoum lost 75 percent of its oil reserves to its new southern neighbor, causing China to lose billions, including its drilling facilities located on the border cutting across the Upper Nile region in an area with the largest oil deposits.

The assortment of killers and criminal misfits Washington backed as its representatives with the formation of the Salva Kiir government in Juba was a fragile coalition from the beginning, fraught with a tenuous power sharing agreement between bitter rivals Kiir and Riek Machar, who was installed as Kiir's vice president.

The rivalry of the two has its roots the Second

Sudanese Civil War, when Machar broke away from the SPLM, led by John Garang and in which Salva Kiir was a rising power. Machar formed a separate militia, with both Machar and the SPLM declaring war on each other. After years of protracted conflict between the two militias, in 2002, Machar reconciled with Garang and rejoined the SPLM.

The South Sudanese Civil War began in 2013 between factions supporting president Kiir on the one side and vice president Machar on the other, after Machar led an attempted coup. American imperialism's criminal operation has reached its bloody apogee with the utter devastation of South Sudanese society.

In addition to Washington's hand in choreographing the slaughter in South Sudan are Africom's increased military operations in the region, in which Kenya, Uganda, and Ethiopia function as proxies in furtherance of US economic objectives in Africa.

Kenya is currently engaged in a war on the population of Somalia on behalf of its patrons in Washington, and Uganda is a key ally of the US in lending its military bases, armed forces, and logistical support, including allowing the US to utilize a section of the international airport at Entebbe for its drones which carry out their deadly airstrikes in Somalia and surveillance missions across Africa. Ethiopia is also a key ally, lending unequivocal support and its armed forces as proxies for Washington's bloody operations.



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