

## Sudan

### Abp of Canterbury urges prayer

### Anglican Communion's response



### Archbishop urges prayers as violence mounts in South Sudan

The Archbishop of Canterbury has urged the Anglican Communion to pray and advocate for an end to the intense fighting

*More than 200,000 people have been displaced amid the fighting*

which has overtaken large regions of South Sudan in recent days.

Over 500 people are feared dead in South Sudan's capital, Juba, where fighting first broke out. The violence has since spread, particularly affecting Jonglei, Unity and Upper Nile States.

Archbishop Justin wrote to Anglican primates and moderators today at the request of Archbishop Daniel Deng Yak, Archbishop of the Episcopal Church of South Sudan and Sudan.

[Writing to Archbishop Justin](#), Archbishop Daniel asked for sustained prayer, for advocacy on an immediate peace process, and for humanitarian support from across the Anglican Communion.

Describing the desperate situation of conflict in which at least 1,000 people - and likely many more - have lost their lives and over 200,000 people have been displaced, Archbishop Daniel said: "We as the church are deeply concerned and worried that if the situation is not contained it will lead to chaos which is uncontrollable."

In an account of his visit to Awerial to witness the situation for the communities displaced by intense fighting in Bor, Archbishop Daniel described how some are occupying churches and schools, while others are living under trees.

In his letter to Anglican Communion leaders, Archbishop Justin stressed that the humanitarian crisis in South Sudan has reached "breaking point", and urged leaders to advocate for urgent support from aid organisations.

He added: "I commend the appeal for the church's own response through the Sudan Development and Relief Agency (SUDRA) which will soon be promulgated through the Anglican Alliance."

The Archbishop said the feast of the Epiphany "reminds us of the showing of Jesus Christ as the saviour who has come for the healing of nations."

Ending his letter, he offered "greetings and prayers that the peace and healing of our Saviour may be the balm for all that is broken and wounded in our world."

## Anglican Communion's response to Sudan

**Anglicans and Episcopalians around the Communion are responding to first-hand accounts of conflict and the growing humanitarian crisis in Africa's newest country, South Sudan.**



Since hostilities broke out on 15 December different factions of the South Sudanese army have been fighting each other and killing civilians, says the UN. The UN believes that thousands have been killed and as many as 180,000 displaced in the violence.

Eye witness accounts of the conflict shared by clergy from the Episcopal Church of South Sudan and Sudan (ECSSS) over the past few weeks have fuelled calls for prayers and support for the beleaguered country.

## 'It's a war zone'

The most disturbing reports came from the Bishop of Bor Ruben Akurdit Ngong, now in Juba, who spoke to several media outlets about the situation in the town.

In a recent BBC interview he described it as "really terrible, it's horrible. You cannot even describe it.

"Two days, we came out of the UNMISS compound and it seemed to be alright. But suddenly things turned around and we heard gunshots and the rebels running towards Bor town. So everyone started fleeing in different directions. They ran into the bush. Some came into the town. Some went to the River Nile, others towards Lakes State and Juba.

"It's a war zone. You find dead bodies everywhere. When you are in Bor town, you move around closing your nose because of the smell. Bor is in



anarchy because the government is not in control. The rebels are not in control. What they are doing is fighting each other. There is no system, no way that help can come to the civilian population. There is no way even to get medicines to the vulnerable. It is just a really terrible situation."

On New Year's Eve, the Revd Daniel Kon Malual, Secretary in the Office of the Bishop of Bor reported that, "Most of the Diocese of Bor Congregation is displaced and all villages of the archdeaconry of Baidit, Tong, Mathiang are all burned down by the Lau Nuer Youth. [The] Majority of the people are under trees in Awinrial County of Lake State. Other population flew to swarm area West of Baidit Payam and are under threat of attack from Lau Nuer Youth."

## Making their escape

Four days earlier South Sudan priest the Revd John Daau had written to supporters to explain that he, like so many others, had made the difficult

decision to flee South Sudan--his overriding concern was the safety of his heavily pregnant wife who was only two weeks away from giving birth.

Mr Daau laid out the challenges facing the tens of thousands trying to leave the country and his guilt at making the decision to escape to family in Kenya in a relative's vehicle.

"Those [who could] preferred to leave the country for fear of what may happen next despite the assurance from the government that all will be alright soon. I saw thousands of South Sudanese and foreigners (mainly Kenyans and Ugandan) crowded at the [Ugandan] border...Perhaps, over 2000 private vehicles were parked by the time I was at the border, all going through clearance on both side of Ugandan-South Sudan border as drivers scrambled in the long queues to clear and receive visas."

### People are dying

On January 3, the Primate of ECSSS, Archbishop Daniel Deng Bul, wrote in a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, that the situation was increasingly desperate.

"I myself and the head of SUDRA (our Church's local Relief and Rehabilitation Agency) visited the area and [saw] over 75 thousand people (and more are still coming) mainly women and children, some occupying churches, schools and other living under trees.

"The situation is more desperate as there is no clean water to drink, little food to eat, no good sanitation and lack of health facilities."

Archbishop Deng Bul explained that, as a response to the crisis, he has formed an Emergency Crisis committee with the Bishop of Bor as its chairman. The committee is working with SUDRA to consolidate a proposal for the humanitarian response in the affected dioceses.

The Archbishop called on relief agencies and the wider Communion to help the Province in its work to alleviate the suffering of people affected by the conflict: "Some of them are now dying of hunger and diseases, particularly the children ... as the humanitarian crisis has reached a breaking point."

One response by Archbishop Justin Welby has been to write to all Primates of the Anglican Communion sharing with them ECSSS's request for prayer and support.

## Collaborating on aid

Over the Christmas and New Year period, Anglican/Episcopal agencies including ERD, the Anglican Alliance and the Anglican Board of Mission met on conference calls. Together, with members of ECSSS, they have been working on developing a co-ordinated humanitarian response through the local churches.

According to Bishop Andudu Adam Elnail of ECSSS's Kadugli Diocese, whatever relief goods are required, he believes there will also be a need to train pastors for reconciliation and peacebuilding.

The consolidated proposal is expected in a few days and will be posted on the [Anglican Alliance's website](http://www.anglicanalliance.org/). - <http://www.anglicanalliance.org/>

## Prayers for peace

Elsewhere in the Anglican Communion, South Sudanese living in Melbourne, Australia turned an annual service of thanksgiving for the past year into a national day of mourning and anxiety on New Year's Day.

More than 200 adults and 70 children gathered at the Anglican Church of the Apostles, Sunshine, for a regular thanksgiving service. But because most of those present come from the vicinity of Bor, the prayers reflected the anxiety and concern about relatives back home.

Prayers for 'peace in South Sudan and wellbeing of all civilians' were led by the Revd Abraham Angau. Prayers for the future were led by the Revd Daniel Gai Aleu.

The Anglican Church in Melbourne has 17 congregations worshipping in the Dinka language, scattered from Sunshine to Dandenong.

In Uganda, the Primate Archbishop Stanley Ntagali also used part of his Christmas message to call for a dialogue to end the conflict in South Sudan.

## See also

Report of January 6

<http://www.anglicanalliance.org/news/18642/archbishop-of-south-sudan-and-sudan-appeals-for-help-as-thousands-are-affected-by-ongoing-violence>

December 21 Plea by Archbishop of Canterbury

<http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/5210/archbishop-joins-peace-plea-to-south-sudan-leaders>