

Solving the South Sudan Health Crisis

World Health Organization

I. Introduction

The United Nations World Health Organization, also known as WHO, is an organization that focuses on helping people all over the world achieve a healthier future. This organization helps combats all health-related problems. It works with the 194 Member States and has approximately 7000 employees. WHO was founded on April 7, 1948, every year we celebrate that date as World Health Day. The organization is financed by annual benefaction made by member countries.

WHO focuses on bringing relief to countries that are having a health-related problem. The organization works with nongovernmental organizations, governments, agencies, foundations, etc... The organization mainly works on advising health ministries and provides treatment and care through the health field.

WHO has stepped in to help a health crisis located in South Sudan. The crisis was initiated by political conflict, economic problems, and drought. This has caused huge displacement, extreme food shortages, and violence. This crisis has caused South Sudan to have the third-largest refugee crisis. There have been many peace agreements signed over the course of the civil war initiated in late 2013 but they have been repeatedly violated. The displacement has disrupted planting and destroyed critical coping resources like livestock. The crop production was slashed and only 52% of the national cereal needs are being met by harvests. The economy is in crisis. The South Sudanese pound's value has declined and the costs of goods and services has increased enormously with an inflation rate that reached 835%. Famine was declared in 2017 in parts of South Sudan. It left 100,000 people on the border of starvation.

II. History and Description of the Issue

Vocabulary

To understand the situation that is currently being lived in South Sudan there are some key terms that must be defined. Extreme poverty is a crucial factor in the recent crisis, according to the World Bank, the poverty line is \$1.90. The World Bank estimates that less than 10% of the world's population lives under 2 dollars a day. There are 736 million people living in poverty in 2015 and half of them live in only 5 countries. They are the most populous countries of South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa like India and Nigeria. The two regions account for 85% of the world's poor. Poverty does not allow people to access the necessary things to live. People do not have access to water or electricity and they do not have the same opportunities of survival as most of the global population does. Famine, another key concept is the situation in which there is not enough food for a huge number of people and causes death or illness. Famine is caused by several factors including

war, inflation, crop failure, government policies or population imbalance. Countries in sub-Saharan Africa have some extreme cases of famine.

Origins and Causes

Sudan's healthcare system entered a new phase of crisis in 2019 after years of war, economic decline and underinvestment. The crisis has unsettled communities, more than 4 million people are displaced because of conflict and hunger.

South Sudan's crisis occurred after it gained independence from Sudan in July 2011. The ruling political party that led the independence is divided and fighting for power. The violence started in December 2013 after the president accused his vice president of an attempted coup. Violence spread throughout the country and displaced 413,000 civilians. The fighting has become a brutal civil war. There have been child soldiers associated with armed groups. More than 19,00 children have served as child soldiers since 2013. South Sudan is still one of the least developed countries in the world. The majority of the country is rural. Before the civil war, more than half of its citizens living in extreme poverty. Half of the population was dependent on agriculture and suffered from malnourishment. 70% of the country's children are out of school. Children throughout the country cannot learn, people can't work and farmers can't plant. South Sudan has agricultural potential but because of poor infrastructure and technology growing enough crops to feed the whole country is extremely difficult.

It is very risky and challenging bringing humanitarian support to people because of the violent context. South Sudan has become one of the most dangerous places in the world to be an aid worker. 2.3 million people have crossed over to neighboring countries like Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda... it has resulted in Africa's largest refugee crisis. More than a million and a half people have been displaced inside South Sudan. Humanitarian aid workers have been giving small food rations to help but in the rainy season deliveries are infrequent and difficult, people cannot count on them. Because of the ongoing hunger people are more vulnerable to dangerous diseases. Children's development are impacted by hunger. Without proper nutrition they can't have critical developmental milestones. Around 860,000 children under 5 in South Sudan are malnourished. People cannot buy food because food stores are running out and markets are empty. The price of the food that is available has skyrocketed. Families don't have money to buy anything. 20% of households have food shortages and hunger has caused at least 2 deaths each day for every 10,000 people.

Refugees are taking refuge in U.N . bases that were turned into displacement camps but the conditions are inadequate. There are six U.N. camps where people are safe. The majority of the people in the camps are women and children, and most of the refugees are under the age of 18. Women and girls are experiencing abuse during raids on their homes or when they are fleeing or leave their shelters to search for food and basic necessities.

Diseases like cholera and malaria can spread quickly in conditions like the ones in South Sudan. There are also many infections that are caused by malnutrition, contaminated water, and weak immune systems. An infection in a young child can lead to death. There have been reports of cholera outbreaks and the presence of Ebola in neighboring countries. In 2019, the number of measles cases is six times higher than in 2018. Throughout the nation, disease outbreaks are lasting longer and reaching new regions. A cholera outbreak lasted almost two years leaving at least 436



deaths. Medicine to treat the diseases is in short supply. Only 20% of the country's health facilities are operational. 80% of the population cannot reach a hospital within 24 hours. The breakdown of the national healthcare system has caused low vaccination rates. Due to poor socio-economic conditions, most of the epidemics that are eradicated from most parts of Africa are still causing epidemics in South Sudan.

Women do not stop giving birth during conflicts and disasters. Out of the affected population, 280,000 are pregnant women and 42,000 of them are facing pregnancy and childbirth complications. The maternal mortality rate has increased with an estimated 789 deaths per 100,000 live births. 85% of 2 million internally displaced persons in South Sudan are women and children that are subject to sexual violence related to the conflict.

If the country's civil war continues South Sudan will deteriorate. Families will remain in away from their land and the economy will continue to decline. People will die from starvation, disease and malnutrition.

III. International Response and Bloc Analysis

As the health crisis continues to deteriorate humanitarian aid to provide support to South Sudan have been underfunded. The UN appealed for \$1.72 billion to assist the crisis in 2018. Only 68 % of the budget was given. In 2019, the UN appealed for \$1.5 billion to provide critical support. Only 30% percent of the budget has been founded until now. Humanitarian organizations like Mercy Corps are partnering up with the UN using private contributions and international funding.

In August 2018, President Salva Kiir and rebel leader Riek Machar signed a peace and power-sharing agreement where the president granted general amnesty to rebel leaders like Machar. World vision, an NGO began with a UNICEF funded program to help 700 children who were used as child soldiers reunite with their families and return to school. Despite the peace agreement signed, South Sudan remains in a serious humanitarian crisis.

WHO has confirmed and responded to measles outbreaks and has vaccinated 182 000 children against the disease. The World Health Organization has 58 early warning alert and response system (EWARS) sites in South Sudan to enhance the detection of disease outbreaks. Despite the security situation and challenging conditions to deliver health services, WHO and other partners are providing crucial support for the people of South Sudan. WHO has response teams to investigate and respond to emerging outbreaks and have kits for several infectious diseases and for medical complications like severe acute malnutrition (SAM). WHO works with the national public health laboratory to test samples of cholera, measles and other diseases to create fast responses that will save lives. They have trained health workers to conduct nutrition assessments and identify the signs of SAM.

Organizations like Mercy Corps provides desperately-needed latrines, showers, clean water, hand washing stations to help people prevent and survive the spread of diseases. They also distribute emergency funds to help families. They have an emergency educational program that repairs schools, trains teachers and provides school supplies and free meals so children can continue having and education despite the crisis.

IV. Committee Mission

Throughout the discussion about possible solutions for the ongoing crisis, delegates must remember that the World Health Organization's main goal is bringing relief to countries that are having a health-related problem and to help people achieve a future. Delegates must have in mind that this is a third world country where resources are limited and the security challenges that the region has. Delegates must think of solutions that will create a safe environment for everyone, especially women and children that are being abused sexually. Create a solution that will peacefully stop the war.

The purpose of WHO is to create a solution that will work both in the long and short term solutions that will reduce the risk of disease and that will end the famine crisis. The proposal of the solution should include what the government should do to resolve this problem.

Questions for Further Consideration

1. How will people get access to medications?
2. How are people going to plant their crops?
3. What agreement should be made to resolve the war?
4. How are diseases going to be controlled?
5. How are people going to eat?
6. To what extent should the government work with NGOs?

V. Annotated links for further research

a) General Country Research

[UN South Sudan](#): Provides statistics and a general overview of the country.

[The World Factbook](#): You can find information on any country's background.

b) Committee Links

[WHO](#): Official site of the World Health Organization. It includes the health topics and the countries they are working in.

c) Topic Links

[Humanitarian Response](#): Document that gives you an overview of the crisis, the main problems, the response plans, etc...

Guadalajara Model United Nations

American School Foundation of Guadalajara



[Latest situation report:](#) Document that describes the current conditions the country is in.

[OCHA:](#) official UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs website. It has a lot of information about the topic and situation reports.

[Humanitarian Aid:](#) Article that gives great ideas for possible solutions.

[UNHRC:](#) Official UNHRC Refugee Agency website that has the current operations, gives more information about the crisis.

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