



SUDAN RELIEF REVIEW

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

SUDAN RELIEF FUND HELPS HIV/AIDS VICTIMS IN WESTERN EQUATORIA STATE LIVE WITH DIGNITY



By teaching people with HIV/AIDS tailoring skills, the Star Support Group helps them live with dignity – and hopes to see the program become self-sustaining.

HIV/AIDS is one of the greatest global health challenges of modern times. More than 38 million people around the world are currently living with the virus, with millions more becoming infected each year. This problem especially impacts a poor and war-torn country like South Sudan, where the constant fighting and lawlessness cripple efforts to medically treat those infected, and to provide the public awareness needed to prevent the virus from spreading.

In Western Equatoria State, there is very little awareness of HIV/AIDS prevention among the local population. And up until now there has been little concerted effort to empower People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). These poor souls face challenges such as stigmatization, discrimination and rejection by their fellow citizens. And no one provides schooling for the young orphans whose parents have tragically died from the disease.

To meet these vital needs, the Sudan Relief

Fund is providing financial resources for a new project in Yambio County, which is in the Catholic Diocese of Tombura-Yambio in Western Equatoria State. The project is run by the Christian Brothers (1 from Kenya, 1 from Ireland and 1 from Nigeria) and it has four core objectives:

- Providing medical care and social support for PLWHA and children infected or affected by the virus.
- Promoting awareness of ways to manage HIV/AIDS and prevent spread of the virus.
- Creating a social and cultural environment of HIV prevention in the community by reducing the stigma and discrimination against PLWHA.
- Developing a team of advocates in the community to help PLWHA learn the skills needed to support themselves.

With financial support from the Sudan Relief Fund, the Christian Brothers' are currently providing 1,486 people infected with HIV/AIDS with free drugs and other medications,

which must be purchased in Uganda. They are also caring for 456 orphans. Of these youngsters, we are paying the tuition for 222 of them to attend primary and secondary schools in Yambio.

We are also helping to fund the salaries of three nurses — who are instrumental in dispensing the medications to patients — as well as social workers (who will counsel and advise them) and other essential staff. We have provided funding for the refurbishment of a local pharmacy, including the installation of metallic shelves, which houses the medications. And we are helping pay for the training of women suffering from the AIDS virus to sustain themselves by producing and selling tailored items. From these sales, we hope to see them become self-sustaining in the future.

In all, the Christian Brothers are making great strides in empowering those living with HIV/AIDS. The members of the group express heartfelt gratitude and appreciation for all of the generous donors to the Sudan Relief Fund for their prayers and financial support. Your generosity has played a

continued on Page 2

INSIDE

A Message from SRF's President.....	2
SRF-Supported Solidarity Teacher Training College reopens after brutal attack	2
SRF funding helps promote safe child births in South Sudan	3
Human rights abuses in western South Sudan	3
Ways You Can Give To Sudan Relief Fund.....	4

*Sudan Relief Fund helps HIV/AIDS victims ...
continued from Page 1*

critically important part in helping to promote the dignity of the marginalized men, women and children impacted by the HIV/AIDS crisis in Western Equatoria State.

If you feel called to once again help our brothers and sisters, please use the reply form and envelope enclosed with this issue of *Sudan Relief Review*. May God bless you for any gift you can spare to help Christ's children in South Sudan.

SRF-SUPPORTED SOLIDARITY TEACHER TRAINING COLLEGE REOPENS AFTER BRUTAL ATTACK



The reopening of the Solidarity Teacher Training College exemplifies the commitment of the Catholic Church, the people of Yambio and the generous supporters of Sudan Relief Fund.

In the last issue of the *Sudan Relief Review*, we reported on the Solidarity Teacher Training College in Yambio being attacked by thieves. The attack occurred last December when five armed men assaulted four nuns, raping one sister and physically beating some of the others. The entire Catholic community was shocked and deeply saddened by the senseless violence.

The attack and the broader civil unrest in Western Equatoria State caused the training college to close during the months of January and February. But we can report that the college successfully reopened in March, with 118 students now enrolled.

Many former students have not returned due to security concerns in the area. They

continued on Page 3

A MESSAGE FROM NEIL CORKERY

PRESIDENT OF THE SUDAN RELIEF FUND

I know you join me in giving thanks to God for Dr. Tom Catena of Mother of Mercy Hospital in the Nuba Mountains.

He is the only doctor permanently based in the region, serving more than 1.1 million people in a 350-mile radius.

But in addition to caring for his patients, Dr. Tom also cares deeply about the welfare of his hospital staff. The staff's commitment to the people makes so much of his selfless work possible.

That's why Dr. Tom is hoping we can provide the hospital with an EMERGENCY GIFT of \$189,744 to cover staff salaries for the next twelve months. Such a contribution would deliver much-needed salary support to help him retain his staff — and ensure that the hospital can continue caring for the sharp increase in patients who need medical treatment.

Please help me answer Dr. Tom's emergency plea for help. Time is urgent, so I hope you will send whatever you can to the Sudan Relief Fund as soon as possible.

Thank you so much. I am so grateful for the love you have for our hurting brothers and sisters in South Sudan and the Nuba Mountains.

Yours in faith,

Neil Corkery
President

have lost homes and belongings, and some have been living in the jungle. These families are disturbed and the men feel they cannot leave their loved ones alone at this time. In addition, they plan on staying to cultivate crops this season so they will be able to feed their children.

Meanwhile, the college's reopening has sparked great interest among the local population and resulted in many new students eagerly attending in spite of the region's security issues. "It is a delight to see all the new faces and to know that word is spreading about the training going on in Yambio," said Sister Margaret Scott, RNDM, the Australian nun who is the principal of the college.

The first week began with a special prayer assembly led by Bishop Eduardo Hiiboro to welcome new staff members as well as all students. The Solidarity Teacher Training College has men and women of different religious congregations and countries. It trains primary school teachers who will go out to teach in primary schools around the country and improve South Sudan's literacy rate – which is essential to seeing this impoverished young nation one day grow and prosper.

SRF FUNDING HELPS PROMOTE SAFE CHILD BIRTHS IN SOUTH SUDAN

Conflict in South Sudan has made access to quality healthcare services for all people nearly impossible. That includes vulnerable women and children, and especially expectant mothers.

In 2014, the Sudan Relief Fund began partnering with the Catholic Medical Mission Board (CMMB) to help this underserved population in the region. With SRF financial support, CMMB is launching the Safe Motherhood initiative in the Nzara area in the diocese of Tombura-Yambio.



The innovative Safe Motherhood initiative will help pregnant South Sudanese women give birth to healthy babies.

The Safe Motherhood initiative will focus on increasing access to healthcare delivery services for 3,600 pregnant women. An integrated approach will be used to combine clinical improvements to build capacity at Nzara Hospital and local health outposts, additional training for health workers, and a community-based program to increase access to clean water for 7,500 people.

SRF decided to partner with CMMB because they have a long track record of implementing proven solutions that will fix broken health systems in Africa. The organization focuses on combating the leading causes of illness and death among women and children, most of which are preventable. This makes CMMB uniquely qualified to work for safe child births in South Sudan, and worthy of the investment from SRF that our generous donors make possible.

This effort is as a foundational "building block" toward creating

a prosperous South Sudan. Healthy pregnancies are needed for healthy babies. And healthy babies are the first step toward having healthy children who can grow up, become educated to reach their full potential, and ultimately provide the leadership needed to transform this troubled country.

HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN WESTERN SOUTH SUDAN



Homes burnt in Yambio city during recent clashes between government forces and rebels.

South Sudanese government forces have carried out numerous killings, enforced disappearances, rapes and other grave abuses in the Western Equatoria region during expanded fighting in the country. Rebel armed groups have also committed serious abuses, including rape.

"As South Sudan's fighting has shifted west, so too have the atrocities by government forces and rebel groups. South Sudan's leaders should put a stop to all abuses," said Daniel Bekele, Africa director at Human Rights Watch. "Both an arms embargo and an effective war crimes court are also crucial to help stem the abuses and send a message that the crimes will be punished."

Under the most recent peace agreement, the government and the opposition agreed to form a transitional government and cease hostilities and abuses. Since then, however, fighting between government forces and the rebels has spread to the previously uncontested western areas of the country, accompanied by familiar patterns of abuses against civilians.

Fighting has also surged in other parts of South Sudan. In one widely reported incident, on February 17, government soldiers and other armed men attacked an UN-protected civilian camp in Malakal. About 20 people were killed and at least 100 injured, and 2,700 shelters were burned. Most of the camp's 43,000 residents were forced to flee to an older protection site or back into the city. The UN called the attack a possible war crime.

Unfortunately, the improvements many hoped for following the peace agreement have never materialized. Instead civilians are suffering continuous attacks and other abuses carried out with impunity. Many observers say the African Union and the UN must take action, which should include the war crimes court and enforcing the arms embargo they have long been threatening.

PLANNED GIVING, LEGACY GIFTS, BEQUESTS, WILLS & ESTATE DONATIONS

Please consider remembering Sudan Relief Fund in your estate planning.



Planned giving or legacy gifts are one of the most generous ways you can help the desperately poor people of South Sudan. At Sudan Relief Fund we are blessed to have the most generous donors in the world. Please consult your investment advisor, accountant or lawyer for details on remembering Sudan Relief Fund.

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Monthly giving to Sudan Relief Fund couldn't be easier. You can make a tax-deductible gift every month by an automatic draft from your checking account or credit card. And because it's done automatically on the same day every month, it's convenient and requires no extra effort on your part. Plus you have total control: you decide how much you want to donate -- and you can stop making monthly donations at any time.

Every dollar makes a difference. To sign up for monthly giving to Sudan Relief Fund simply check the box on the included reply coupon, indicate the amount of your monthly gift and mail it back to us in the postage-paid envelope enclosed. Thank you.



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HOPE AND CHRIST'S LOVE.

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