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PRESS RELEASE

World Vision hopes for peaceful transition in Sudan

Organization urges North and South Sudan to resolve differences ahead of July 9th independence

(MISSISSAUGA, Ont.) June 9, 2011 — With one month to go before South Sudan becomes the world's newest independent nation, World Vision is hopeful that military clashes that have forced thousands of people to flee can be brought to an end to avert a larger humanitarian crisis.

More than 70,000 people have been displaced in the Abyei region following heavy fighting between the North's Sudan Armed Forces and Sudan People's Liberation Army of the South. World Vision has been asked by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) to coordinate humanitarian efforts in the Warrup region, which is located just south of Abyei. World Vision South Sudan is working with other humanitarian agencies to distribute non-food items, such as mosquito nets, plastic sheets and blankets in the town of Kuajok, where thousands of displaced people from the Abyei region have arrived with virtually no possessions.

"We are concerned about the safety of civilians, especially children, who become extremely vulnerable during displacement," says Edwin Asante, the Programme Director for World Vision South Sudan. "Violence and displacement will have a traumatic impact on these children, some of whom may have been separated from their families."

The fighting comes six months after a referendum held in January, in which the people of South Sudan overwhelmingly voted for independence, which will become a reality on July 9, 2011.

"We are carefully monitoring the humanitarian situation, and are in constant communication with our partners through the UN to respond as the needs dictate," Asante adds.

World Vision has operated in North Sudan since 1983 and in South Sudan since 1989 and operates a number of relief, recovery and development programs that seek to promote peace and reconciliation in Sudan, while improving the lives of children and their families.

"In situations where families are displaced, it is the children who are the most vulnerable and suffer the most. World Vision is working in cooperation with other agencies in Sudan to provide vital supplies to those affected, and to offer support and hope to those who need it most."

*—Dave Toycen,
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