

# WFP Food warehouse looted in Juba, Sudan

The World Food Programme is outraged by the looting of its main warehouse in Juba. Despite that serious setback, WFP staff have already been distributing vital food assistance to people displaced by the violence in the South Sudanese capital.



Image by 123RF

At WFP's request, UNMISS peacekeepers did an assessment of the warehouse on the western edge of Juba last week and reported extensive looting of food. WFP staff have not yet been able to reach the warehouse to confirm the extent of the losses.

Before the fighting started at the end of last week, more than 4,500 metric tons of food was in the warehouse, enough to provide lifesaving food and nutrition assistance to about 220,000 people for a month. It also held trucks, generators and other relief items.

"WFP strongly condemns the theft of food intended for the poorest and most vulnerable people of South Sudan," said WFP deputy regional director Vernon Archibald. "While the extent of the looting is not yet clear, we fear that the loss of these vital food supplies will severely hamper WFP's ability to assist the tens of thousands of people who have fled their homes because of the violence."

Regardless of the theft, country director Joyce Luma noted that WFP has already provided urgently needed food assistance to thousands of displaced people sheltering at UN peacekeeping bases, using stocks from a smaller warehouse

in another part of town.

“In addition to providing food assistance to displace people in Juba, which is our normal role, WFP has also sheltered some 3,000 people in our main office compound, mostly women and children who fled for their lives as fighting raged around us,” said Luma. “A new mother fled to our compound with her baby son just hours after giving birth.”

Luma added, “At the same time we cannot forget that the dire humanitarian crisis in other parts of South Sudan has not abated, and our teams throughout the country are still providing lifesaving support to millions of people who face severe hunger.”

The warehouse on the west side of Juba serves as WFP’s main logistical hub inside of South Sudan, and is used to supply WFP operations in the rest of the country.

“In past incidents of large-scale looting, WFP has been able to negotiate the return of looted food when those who took it recognised the importance of the humanitarian assistance that WFP provides,” Luma said. “We hope that the parties responsible for this devastating loss will show their humanity and return the relief supplies so they can be used to assist thousands of innocent civilians who have been caught up in this brutal conflict.”

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