

IOM Responds to Humanitarian Needs after Fighting Erupts in Malakal PoC Site

South Sudan, 19 February 2016 – IOM is responding to urgent humanitarian needs after heavy fighting erupted between armed actors in the UN protection of civilians (PoC) site near South Sudan’s Malakal town on 17 February. The violence and a fire that ripped through the site have left at least 18 people dead,^[1] forced an estimated 25,000 IDPs^[2] to flee their shelters to secure areas of the site and destroyed critical humanitarian infrastructure, including two IOM primary health care clinics.

The fighting continued through 18 February, leaving some areas of the PoC site looted and burned, including shelters, clinics and water tanks.

First responders from medical non-governmental organisations and IOM are treating the injured, which are estimated to be at least 91. Casualty figures may increase once humanitarian workers gain access to the affected areas of the site to assess the situation.

“IOM and our partners are using all available measures to save lives. However, the destruction of humanitarian facilities severely hinders our ability to assist the vulnerable when they are most in need,” says IOM South Sudan Chief of Mission David Derthick.

Additional IOM technical and operational specialists deployed to the Malakal PoC site on 19 February to assess needs and facilitate lifesaving aid operations. In addition, IOM is dispatching 6.5 metric tons of emergency relief items, including tents for medical assistance, to Malakal via cargo flight.

Prior to the fighting, more than 47,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) from the Shilluk, Dinka and Nuer ethnic groups, as well as Darfuris, were seeking protection at the site in response to the two-year conflict and rising humanitarian needs across the country.



IDPs flee fighting in the Malakal PoC site. IOM

When the fighting broke out, the majority of these IDPs fled to secure areas of the site that were not designed to host IDPs, and thousands of others left the PoC site toward surrounding areas.

In coordination with partners, IOM is installing temporary water points to provide safe water to IDPs and taking measures to ensure continual supply of water from the White Nile River, which sources the majority of water to the PoC site.

IOM and partners had developed new areas of the PoC site in 2014 and 2015 to improve living conditions for IDPs and shelter new arrivals, including an influx of [16,000 IDPs](#) in mid-2015.

Since December 2013, the conflict in South Sudan has displaced more than 2.3 million people, including an estimated 1.69 million IDPs. Relief agencies estimate that approximately 6.1 million people will be in need of humanitarian aid this year.

For further information, please contact Ashley McLaughlin at IOM South Sudan, Tel: +211 922 405 716, or Jennifer Pro, Tel: +211 920 885 988; Email: ssudanpsu@iom.int; Website: <http://southsudan.iom.int/>.

[1] As reported on 18 February by Médecins Sans Frontières; the actual figure may be higher.

[2] As of the morning of 19 February. Relief agencies anticipate that the figure could rise to more than 40,000.