

South Sudan: Ceasefire brings signs of hope for end to war

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In the coming days a 'permanent' ceasefire will take effect in war-torn South Sudan, raising hopes that the country's five year brutal conflict will come to an end.

In response to the news of this latest ceasefire, Cathy Hynds, UK aid agency, CAFOD's South Sudan Country Representative said: "This conflict has left millions of people across the country in desperate need of food, clean water, health care, sanitation, shelter and protection. Working alongside Trócaire and our local partners, we are providing humanitarian assistance where it is needed most.

"But, ultimately as the people of South Sudan mark seven years of independence, they need its leaders to redouble their efforts towards a true and lasting peace, as a first step to achieving prosperity; so that people can return to their homes, schools, farms and businesses, to rebuild their lives and communities."

South Sudan gained independence on 9 July 2011, and is the world's youngest country. Despite initial hopes of a peaceful future, conflict broke out in December 2013 between factions loyal to President Salva Kiir and the former Vice President, Dr. Riek Machar. The Church has been at the helm of calling for peace and reconciliation. It has been involved in peace processes at the local, national and international levels.

CAFOD's Church partner - Bishop Barani Eduardo Hiiboro, of the Catholic Diocese of Tombura-Yambio and President of the Sudan and South Sudan Catholic Bishops' Conference, said: "This ceasefire is welcomed, but if it is to mean anything for the suffering people of South

Sudan, then our leadership must face the task of rebuilding our broken pieces - social and political relationships, the fragile economy, and the infrastructure of our states, devastated by the conflict. But, this can only be achieved through a sustainable peace process.

"Many people in South Sudan are wounded in spirit. The pain of decades of war has not been addressed; our hard-won independence did not bring justice for the many who had suffered. No one has been convicted of crimes against humanity, and people have not been able to tell their stories, to relate what happened to them and their family members. Without reconciliation and forgiveness, our wounds will remain open."