

A Humanitarian Crisis: 7 facts about poverty in South Sudan.



Living alongside other single mothers, Martha Nyandit and her children lack plastic sheeting to construct a shelter. When it rains, she has to send some of her children to stay with neighbours. *Photo: Pablo Tosco/Oxfam*

South Sudan became the world's newest country in 2011 after decades of conflict with Sudan. But since its independence, it has faced civil war, climate disasters, and extreme poverty. Here are 7 key facts about living conditions in South Sudan you should know.

Top 7 facts about poverty in South Sudan:

- 1. Most of the South Sudanese population lives in poverty** - According to a recent African Development Bank (AfDB) report, poverty in South Sudan has reached a staggering 92% in 2025, rising from 84% just two years earlier. The report illustrates that this is mainly due to factors such as a drop in oil exports, trade and presidential instability.
- 2. Refugees pour into South Sudan** - By May 2025, over one million people had crossed into South Sudan from Sudan following the outbreak of conflict in April 2023. While many are returning South Sudanese nationals, around 32% are refugees from Sudan and other countries, seeking safety amid the escalating violence. Non-native refugees put added pressure on South Sudan's already fragile economy by

straining public services, increasing demand for scarce resources like food, water, and healthcare, and stretching an underfunded humanitarian system near its limits.

- 3. Inflation has skyrocketed** - Inflation in South Sudan reached 139% in August 2024, sharply eroding purchasing power, according to Charles Undeland, the World Bank Group's country manager. He blamed disrupted oil production, COVID-19, flooding, and the war in Ukraine. Extreme deprivation rose to 92% in 2024. Recovery, Undeland stressed, depends on full implementation of the 2018 peace deal.
- 4. Many survive daily below the basic living line** - A recent *South Sudan Economic Monitor* report reveals that over three-quarters of the population lived below the poverty line in 2022, leaving millions unable to afford basic necessities like food, shelter, and healthcare.
- 5. Flooding fuels economic strain in South Sudan** - South Sudan's ongoing flooding crisis has deepened the country's poverty. By October 2024, floods had displaced 350,000 people and impacted 1.4 million. As a result, food insecurity is projected to rise from 7.1 to 7.7 million people.
- 6. Soaring Food Prices Deepen Crisis** - Disrupted trade with Sudan and tight domestic food supplies have driven sharp increases in food costs across South Sudan. Between January and September 2024, the household minimum expenditure basket surged by 250%.
- 7. Malnutrition amongst Women and Children** - An estimated 2.1 million children under the age of five in South Sudan are expected to suffer from acute malnutrition. Additionally, 1.1 million pregnant and lactating women will require urgent nutritional treatment.

Despite these staggering challenges, humanitarian organisations remain active across the country. By the end of 2024, more than five million women and children received life-saving aid and protection services. Continued support and peacebuilding are essential to stabilise the country and pave the way for recovery.

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