

Pray for peace after renewed fighting in South Sudan



World Mission partners and co-workers are reporting renewed fighting in Malakal, Upper Nile State, South Sudan.

For the past few weeks, there have been increasing inter-ethnic tensions in Malakal, which serves as a base for both South Sudanese military forces and a number of ethnic militias. These groups have clashed on a number of occasions on the outskirts of Malakal, prompting many civilians to flee their homes and seek refuge in a United Nations shelter.

On April 21, fighting broke out in Malakal, reportedly among ethnic militias allied to and armed by South Sudanese government forces.

Leaders of the PC(USA)'s partner, the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan, have asked for prayers for peace and responsible leadership. “Pray for South Sudan,” they plead, “so God will provide leaders who will save the people.” They’ve also asked for prayers for United Nations officials to be able to effectively carry out their mandate to secure peace in the region. Prayers are also requested for the security and protection of all people in conflict-torn South Sudan, including our sisters and brothers in the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan and the South Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church, the faculty, staff and students at Nile Theological College, which recently reopened in Juba, and the nine PC(USA) mission co-workers serving there. Debbie Braaksma, who was a mission co-worker in South Sudan and is now World Mission’s coordinator for the Africa office feels deeply the pain of her brothers and sisters there.

“The situation in South Sudan is tragic; tens of thousands of people have been killed and 2 million more have been displaced since hostilities broke out in December 2013,” Braaksma said. “Humanly speaking, the situation looks dire—but we are ‘Easter people’ who cling to hope in the midst of tragedy. Our Presbyterian partners have been a sure and steady voice for peace courageously standing up for the rights of all South Sudanese through protecting civilians of all ethnic groups and their involvement in the IGAD Peace talks and their leadership role in the South Sudan Council of Churches. It is our duty and honor to help to ‘bear one another's burdens’ as we stand by our sisters and brothers in prayer, and through the presence of our mission co-workers, as they continue to be a bold voice for reconciliation and peace.”