

# German charity alarmed by plight of displaced people in south Sudan

Sudan-displaced

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NAIROBI, March 28 (AFP) - The head of a German charity on Friday voiced concern on the plight of thousands of people who have been forced out of their homes in southern Sudan to make room for the drilling of oil.

"The humanitarian and human rights conditions among the people displaced from the oil-rich regions in Western Upper Nile is very disturbing," Reimund Reubelt, the Executive Director of Hoffnungszeichen (Sign of Hope), told AFP in an interview after visiting the region.

"Those internally displaced people do not have access to healthcare, their sanitation is pathetic, most children are suffering from malnutrition. Surely they need help," said Reubelt.

He said his organisation delivered some 10 tonnes of relief supplies to the affected people this week.

Thousand people have been displaced from the oil fields Bentiu, Koch, Old Fangak and Leer in the West Upper Nile to create room for oil exploitation and construction of a road linking Bentiu to Adok, on the shores of River Nile.

"We fear that many other people might be displaced before the road reaches Adok," said Klaus Stieglitz, Hoffnungszeichen's commissioner for human rights.

Stieglitz said he heard witness accounts of how Khartoum's armed forces and allied militia attacked villages using armoured vehicles and helicopter gunships soon after the government and rebel Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) signed a ceasefire agreement in October.

"Many people were killed, others were displaced and about 12 kidnapped," he added. He urged Khartoum to "facilitate the release of those kidnapped by militiamen".

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