

Subject: WFP NEWS RELEASE: RIVER CONVOY REACHES ISOLATED AREAS IN ULANG, SOUTH SUDAN, SAVING MILLIONS OF DOLLARS ON COSTLY AIRDROPS

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JUBA – The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) has, for the first time since civil war broke out in South Sudan at the end of 2013, managed to send boats carrying humanitarian food assistance up the Sobat river, a major tributary of the White Nile. This necessitated negotiating access and gaining security guarantees to allow safe passage for the vessels which have brought life-saving supplies to tens of thousands of displaced people in Ulang County in the Greater Upper Nile region.

The river convoy, composed of one barge and 11 smaller vessels, transported some 752 metric tons of food and nutrition supplies including sorghum, pulses, vegetable oil and a nutritious porridge blend – enough to sustain 40,000 people for one month. From Renk, where the cargo was loaded, it took the vessels one week to reach Ulang County.

More than half the population of South Sudan – some 6.1 million people – face severe food shortages, according to latest findings of a new Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) [report](#) which focuses on food insecurity for the remainder of the year and the first quarter of 2019.

In response to the growing humanitarian needs in the country, WFP is providing emergency food supplies, targeting 5 million people and using all means of transportation available - road, air and river.

‘Millions of people don’t know where their next meal is coming from,’ says Adnan Khan, WFP’s Country Director in South Sudan. ‘They urgently need humanitarian assistance. Without it, they face serious challenges. The opening of more viable delivery routes helps us to reach more people and get to them more efficiently.’

In extreme circumstances, airdrops are used to supply remote communities but they are a last resort, costing on average six times as much as road or river transport. WFP plans to deliver 6,200 MT of food for some 130,000 people in seven hard-to-reach locations in Ulang, Luakpiny and Nyirol counties over the next 12 months. In previous times, these areas had to be supplied by airdrops.

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The United Nations World Food Programme - saving lives in emergencies and changing lives for millions through sustainable development. WFP works in more than 80 countries around the world, feeding people caught in conflict and disasters, and laying the foundations for a better future.

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