



AFRICA/SOUTH SUDAN - Diseases and malnutrition in refugee camps continue to increase in South Sudan

Yida (Agenzia Fides) - Since last April the refugees in the refugee camp in Yida, in the south Sudanese State of Upper Nile, have doubled because of scarce food resources and the ongoing conflict since June 2011 in the state of Kordofan. For the 60,000 people currently in Yida, health care and access to clean water is lacking, situations that fuel the proliferation of diarrheal disease. In a clinic set up by the organization Doctors Without Borders (DWB), the children are lying on beds while the parents try to ward off the flies circling the young patients. According to the testimonies of DWB volunteers, the main point remains hygiene: despite the improvements made to the power supply, malnourished children continue to be many because of poor sanitary conditions in the camp. Malnutrition, a consequence of diarrhea, remains the main health problem due to the difficulty of distributing water. In addition, because of the absence of toilets, people use the fields, only when they come back they wash their hands but without soap. To try to stem disease outbreaks and the resulting malnutrition, the United Nations is providing for the construction of latrines and wells, as well as double rations of soap. Torrential rains have stopped the trucks with food, and refugees in Yida only have food for another month. According to one of the leaders of the World Food Programme of the United Nations in South Sudan, supplies are not lacking, but the problem of their distribution remains serious. The rains and the bombs continue to fall on the Nuba Mountains and it is possible that the delivery of health services and food is canceled in the event that a new wave of refugees were to cross the border. (AP) (Agenzia Fides 30/08/2012)