

50,000 children could die in months in S.Sudan: UNICEF

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Conflict in South Sudan has triggered a serious risk of famine that will kill up to 50,000 children within months if immediate action is not taken, the UN warned on Friday.

The African country has experienced high levels of malnutrition since it gained independence in 2011, UNICEF said, and conditions have worsened since [ethnic conflict](#) broke out between troops loyal to President Salva Kiir and supporters of his former deputy Riek Machar.

"Now the ongoing conflict has pushed them to the edge—unless treatment is scaled up immediately, up to 50,000 children under the age of five are likely to die," the agency said.

It estimates that 3.7 million people are at risk of "[food insecurity](#)."

"Sadly, worse is yet to come. If conflict continues, and farmers miss the planting season, we will see [child malnutrition](#) on a scale never before experienced here," said Jonathan Veitch, UNICEF representative in South Sudan.

"If we cannot get more funds and better access to reach malnourished children in South Sudan, tens of thousands of under-fives will die."

UNICEF's immediate goal is to treat 150,000 severely [malnourished children](#) under five with food supplements, vitamins and water purification tablets, and to help pregnant or nursing women.

To do so, it needs \$38 million but has so far raised only \$4.6 million.

The United Nations, whose World Food Programme stocks in the country have been looted, has warned that the fighting puts in danger harvests that are crucial to staving off a worse humanitarian disaster.

Nearly 900,000 people have been displaced by the conflict.

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