

Church council sends peace teams to South Sudan

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Nairobi, Kenya, August 29 (ENInews)--The Sudan Council of Churches has dispatched peace teams to calm regions of Jonglei state in South Sudan, where humanitarian agencies say hundreds have died and more than 26,000 people have been displaced in inter-ethnic fighting.

The Rev. Ramadan Chan Liol, the council's general secretary, said the two teams will deliver a message to the warring communities that there is no future without peace and forgiveness. "This is very urgent. The cycle of revenge after revenge has to be broken," the leader of the Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant churches' group told ENInews on 29 August in a telephone interview. "SCC is taking this as the starting point for the national peace and reconciliation effort. This is a long term initiative."

The teams are visiting the areas of Pibor and Wunroor, where they are mediating between the Nuer Lou and Murle tribes, whose cattle raids and revenge attacks have left over 1,000 people dead since January, according to the United Nations. Within the same period, thousands have been displaced, and hundreds of children and women abducted, the UN said. South Sudan became an independent nation on 9 July after a two-decade-long civil war with Sudan, the northern part of the country.

"Clashes have left villages burned, humanitarian assets looted and hundreds injured or killed," said Lise Grande, United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator in South Sudan on 24 August in a statement. The South Sudan government has said it is investigating the violence.

"There is no place for anything like this in South Sudan and the government and the people will not tolerate it," Benjamin Barnaba Marial, a

caretaker minister for information and broadcasting as was quoted in the Sudan Tribune as saying on 24 August.