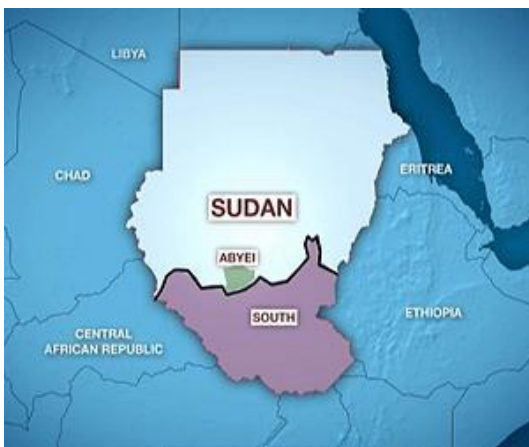


Five Talents partner moves staff to safety amid violence in Sudan **Charlie Shifflett, Five Talents USA, May 31, 2011**

[Rebecca](#), [Sarah](#), [Natalana](#) - these are just a few of the Sudanese women who have seen their lives and families transformed because of [the work of Five Talents](#) and its local partners.

However, renewed violence in war-torn Sudan is once again threatening the livelihood of these and many other local micro-entrepreneurs. South Sudan is set to declare its formal independence from the north on July 9th, but fresh conflicts over key border regions have international observers fearing another outbreak of civil war.



Background: Southern Sudan controls many of the country's oil fields, while the northern government operates the refineries. The two sides had worked out an agreement to share the oil and refineries, but a recent attack by the north on the border town of Abyei has re-ignited fighting and displaced an estimated 45,000 to 90,000 people (for more information click [here](#)). Roads and supply lines to the south also appear to be blocked, cutting off the transport of key resources, such as fuel, from the north to portions of the south.

"There has been a lot of tension, and many people have been displaced from Warrap State, [the state to the south of the region surrounding Abyei]," Peter Macharia, the Sudan country director with Five Talents partner World Concern, said from Wau. "All the [World Concern] staff were moved from Lietnhom [in Warrap State] to Wau." Lietnhom is home to the first community-led bank ever established in South Sudan. Five Talents set it up in 2007. The bank is primarily run by indigenous community members, and so, despite the concerns raised by the recent violence, it is expected to remain in operation.

On Monday, officials from north and south Sudan reportedly agreed to establish a demilitarized zone along the border regions, but, as of Tuesday, goods and fuel were still in short supply. "Things are calmer now, but this area has relied on goods and fuel from the north, and with the roads closed there are now shortages. For example, we have not had fuel for over a week. Yesterday, we bought fuel for \$4.50 per litre." For more background on the current situation in Southern Sudan, see [BBC coverage](#) and the Washington Post's [January 2011 feature](#) on the "tinderbox" town of Abyei.

Five Talents partners in Sudan with [World Concern](#), [the Mothers' Union](#) and the Episcopal Church of Sudan, Diocese of Wau. Besides establishing community banks, the Sudan program provides adult literacy, numeracy and business skills training, household budgeting and saving, as well as spiritual development.