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A Pressing Need to Stay



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DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO, SOUTH SUDAN

The head of the International Red Cross in a recent speech to the UN noted that “Indiscriminate attacks, targeted killings, forced disappearances, and other forms of violence are the realities of life in war-torn South Sudan. The U.S. State Department is warning all U.S. citizens against travel to the Republic of South Sudan because of ‘ongoing fighting and violent crime,’ while the UK Embassy is telling its citizens, “If you have no pressing need to remain, you should leave.”

How does one turn their back on over 10 million persons, the good people of South Sudan, caught in the middle of this conflict, who count on nations like ours for essential health and nutrition needs?

IMA World Health with support from donors such as the World Bank and USAID has recently sent a massive 36-ton shipment of life-saving medical supplies to South Sudan. With another 168 tons on its way from Europe and the United States, Ann and I are in Juba, South Sudan until the middle of November working with dedicated colleagues from the Ministry of Health, assembling 6-month emergency medical kits for the ~ 300 health clinics and hospitals that IMA is supporting in this fragile nation.

It's hard to find encouraging news when one turns on the radio today, and frankly the upshot of residing in the interior of Africa is not being bombarded by a constant stream of internet news channels. However, there are a lot of good and honorable things happening in our world today, even in places like South Sudan...charitable organizations such as IMA who remain committed to meeting critical health needs despite huge obstacles, the steadfast support of donors, and the resilience of the South Sudanese people to build a better future for their children. In reference to the recent Embassy advisories ... we *do* have a "pressing need to remain" ... and are most assuredly covered by prayer, grace, and the abiding friendship of our South Sudanese colleagues.

"For the whole law can be summed up in this one command ... love your neighbor as yourself." (Gal 5:14)