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# SUCCESS STORY

## Prudent Planning Saves Lives

**USAID's leadership on humanitarian coordination enabled a swift response in meeting the emergency needs of Abyei's displaced population.**



After decades of war, the people of South Sudan celebrated the opportunity to determine their own destiny by choosing independence in a historic referendum in January 2011.

Recognizing the history of prolonged conflict in Sudan, USAID and the humanitarian community proactively began contingency planning in 2009 to address humanitarian needs during the potentially volatile referendum period in late 2010 and early 2011. USAID pre-positioned emergency relief supplies and food assistance in strategic locations throughout South Sudan. USAID also created a rapid response fund managed by the International Organization on Migration that could swiftly provide funding to experienced organizations to respond to a wide range of situations. USAID and its partners coordinated closely with the U.N. to maximize resources and efforts.

Although Sudan's referendum period passed without crisis, violence broke out in May 2011 in the contested Abyei Area, displacing an estimated 110,000 people primarily into South Sudan less than two months prior to Independence Day.

The robust early planning efforts for the referendum enabled humanitarian agencies to respond immediately to the Abyei crisis. Aid organizations quickly distributed urgently needed relief items from the pre-positioned stockpiles, reaching approximately 68,000 individuals. The U.N. World Food Program provided emergency food assistance to more than 100,000 displaced people congregated in the border areas and delivered three-month food rations to displaced populations in southern Abyei before the rainy season rendered the roads impassable. Due to careful preparation, all immediate humanitarian needs of the displaced population were met in less than a month's time.

Using a proactive, flexible response strategy, USAID and its partners responded quickly and effectively to a sudden crisis. Through prudent contingency planning and coordination with the U.N. and humanitarian partners, USAID played a critical role in meeting the emergency needs of Abyei's displaced population and saving lives.