

Wau, Sudan, 7 April 2011 — Nearly fifty per cent of the street children in the major urban centres in the oil producing region of South Sudan appear to have been forced onto the streets due to the abuse of their rights, cruelty and a lack of parental care.

Monica Louis Madut, an advisor on gender affairs in the government of Western Bahr el Ghazal made the revelations on Thursday, during a public briefing with local government officials and other stakeholders dealing with street children in Wau.

She was briefing a public gathering attended by Wol Dhiel Thiep, commissioner of Jur River county and community leaders in Wau town, to share the findings of the survey she conducted in seven different parts of the state.

She said a survey conducted in Wau town, indicate that there are about 295 street children, of which 138 were males and 157 female.

The children in Wau are from different ethnicities and places in South Sudan but the majority come from the Greater Bahr el Ghazal and the State of Western Equatoria in Greater Equatoria.

"The abuse of children's rights and a lack of parental care are among the major causes that push children onto the streets. Children are abused by parents, close relatives, guardians and at times the authorities," she told participants at the meeting.

"I almost cried when I heard children narrating how they are surviving on the streets. Where they had lived and how they came to be living as street children in Wau, where the growing number of homeless children is pathetic," explained the official in a public briefing held in Wau.

The official attributed the situation to the death of some parents during the war and household poverty as reasons that push children onto the streets. More than two decades of north-south Sudan civil war in which more than 2 million were killed has orphaned many children.

Poverty was found as another factor which contributed to the going of the children to the street due to economic hardships. It was also detected that some parents send their children to beg on the streets to make ends meet.

"According to the survey", she said, "Some parents pretend that their own children are orphans in order to take advantage of the situation to solicit help," she noted.

The Jur River county commissioner, Thiep also complained that most orphanages in the county lack adequate funds to provide for basic needs of the children. He called for support from the government.

"Street children are not a problem to be solved by non-governmental organisations alone. There

is a need for support from the government to address this situation," he said.

Other participants at the meeting also called for provision of shelters for the children, saying that most of them have limited access to education and health services since they do not have permanent homes.

The children also face sexual abuse by hoodlums, other children and homeless people, with whom they share the streets, the participants said.

"There are also many cases of street children being beaten and mistreated by the police," alleged one participant.

Monica said in her closing remarks that the governor of the state, Brigadier General, Rizik Hassan Zachariah had promised to assist street children who are in schools by providing clothes, tuition fees, stationery and other basic needs.

Source: [allAfrica](#)