

Juba Diocesan Model Secondary School Latest News (17 January 2014)

Students. The School re-opened on 6 January 2014 and there are now 446 students, out of 519, back at the School, (86%). It is likely that most of the 73 not present left for Uganda and Kenya with their parents when the troubles erupted on 15 December 2013.

Staff. The Headmaster has not yet returned and Robert Kei, the Deputy Head, has been appointed Acting Headmaster. All other members of staff are now back except for Charity, the (Kenyan) Senior Mistress who went home to Nairobi for Christmas, and

Dorcas the Matron of the Girls Boarding House. However staff numbers are still below what they should be as replacements have not yet been found for the three teachers who left, with minimum notice, at the end of last term.

Support: The School Support Group in Salisbury has approved and sent out an ex gratia gift to pay a bonus to the teachers and staff, (20% of their January salary). This is in recognition of their courage and commitment in returning to School. We understand that this has been greatly appreciated, as a tangible sign of our support in the tumultuous times through which they are living.

Exams. The school year ends in February. End-of-year exams for first and second years started well on 15 January. Year 3 are due to sit their School Certificate exam sometime this term. No date has been given and with so many professionals leaving Juba there must be a question mark over when the papers will be set.

Girls Boarding House. This has not yet re-opened due to security and to the absence of Charity and Dorcas.

The situation in Juba.

It is estimated that well over 1,000 people have been killed in the troubled areas of South Sudan since 15 December and 450,000 internally displaced to UN compounds and ad hoc refugee camps. There is a camp by Juba airport holding 17,000 and initially 5,000 people crowded into the Cathedral compound. Also, when the troubles erupted many ex-patriots and Sudanese professional left Juba. There were huge queues of vehicles on the border into Uganda and Juba Airport was full of milling crowds wanting to get a flight out. Most offices closed, including our Department for International Development, the British Council, and charities like 'Christian Aid.' The British Embassy was left with only a skeleton staff. Things are now calmer in Juba itself though not in those areas of the Country where the two warring tribes, Dinka and Nuer, 'overlap'. Some people are gradually coming back. We give thanks that Joseph Bilal stayed put,



and Charlie Goldsmith, a long-term supporter of the School, has returned. Their presence is a huge inspiration and help.

Petrol is now a 'black market' commodity and there are few vehicles on the once overcrowded Juba roads, and no public transport. The JDMSS students will be walking to school, some from a distance of 6 miles.

Richard Dean