



The Honourable Christian Paradis, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of International Development  
Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade, and Development Canada  
200 Promenade du Portage  
Gatineau, Quebec K1A 0G4

March 12, 2014

**Re: Critical situation of South Sudanese refugees in Ethiopia**

Dear Minister Paradis,

As a humanitarian organisation delivering vital aid to populations in need across the world, we would like to bring your attention to a very critical situation in Ethiopia. As you may know, the fighting in South Sudan has displaced hundreds of thousands of civilians, some of whom crossed the border to Ethiopia to seek refuge.

Since mid-December 2013, Ethiopia has seen more than 60,000<sup>1</sup> refugees pouring in the Gambella Region. UN agencies expect that close to 100,000 additional refugees could arrive in the coming months.

The purpose of this letter is to alert you to the dire humanitarian conditions facing the refugees in this area which we believe require your full attention, as much as the corresponding allocation of resources.

On 24th and 25th February, following a first alert raised by ACF, a joint exhaustive nutritional screening was organized in Pagak, by ACF, the sanitary authorities of Gambella Region, UNHCR and UNICEF. Pagak is currently the main entry point to Ethiopia for South Sudanese refugees; it hosts up to 15,000 people who are only receiving very basic assistance before being transferred to a refugee camp.

During this nutritional screening, 2,407 children were surveyed. We were shocked by the results: the Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rate was 37.4% including a Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) rate of 11.1%. These figures are significantly beyond emergency thresholds and only compare with the dramatic condition of Somali refugees in 2011, yet very little attention is given to this emergency.

Humanitarian assistance is currently being scaled up in Ethiopia, both at entry points and in refugee camps but this is not enough given the needs of the population. While donors are already mobilized by several simultaneous humanitarian crises, the gravity of the situation for the refugees in the Gambella region compels me to draw your attention to this underrepresented crisis. Additional resources and support are needed to meet the needs of the population and we believe you have the power to make the difference.

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<sup>1</sup> UNHCR data, available here: <http://data.unhcr.org/SouthSudan/regional.php>



We remain committed to alleviating the suffering of these populations and stay at your disposal would you need any additional information.

Yours sincerely,

Susanne Courtney  
Executive Director  
Action Against Hunger/Action contre la Faim Canada

cc: Paul Rochon, Deputy Minister of International Development  
Leslie E. Norton, Director General

