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## SUCCESS STORY

### Water Douses Tensions in Abu Junuk



*A tanker protected by local police brings emergency water supplies to Abu Junuk.*

*USAID/OTI is funding the delivery of emergency water supplies to prevent the outbreak of widespread violence in Southern Kordofan.*

**May 2008** – USAID’s Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) moved quickly last month to stem an imminent large-scale outbreak of violence in Southern Kordofan by supporting the delivery of emergency water supplies to the town of Abu Junuk until the annual rains come.

Tribal conflicts persist along Sudan’s contested north-south border and threaten the successful implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, which brought an end to two decades of civil war. During the dry season in particular, the movement of people and livestock can trigger violent clashes between pastoralists and farmers over the single most important resource in the region: water.

In recent months, tensions driven by disputed land ownership and water rights claims have led

to several violent skirmishes between members of the Misseriya and Nuba tribes in Abu Junuk. The situation escalated markedly in March after armed Misseriya blocked Nuba residents from accessing their traditional water source outside of town. Severe water shortages swept through Abu Junuk, affecting the host community and thousands of displaced people who have taken refuge there. Desperate residents threatened to migrate to a dammed source of water north of town – a source to which they had been denied access by the Misseriya.

When the prospect of widespread conflict began to crush hopes for a planned reconciliation conference between the groups, USAID/OTI immediately approved a grant to deliver water to the town to mitigate tensions. Within one week, approximately 9,000 gallons of water were being delivered to Abu Junuk each day. And as a result, at least 50 families who were preparing to leave town decided to stay. Although relations between the two tribes remain strained, no water-related violence has been reported since the deliveries began.

By providing support that addresses the town’s immediate water crisis and prevents the resurgence of fighting, USAID/OTI is giving local and international actors time to coordinate a lasting solution. The construction of a reservoir is now being planned. Through targeted programming in Sudan’s most contentious regions, USAID/OTI strives to reduce tensions that could lead to widespread conflict and threaten the national peace process.