



Monday 12 March, 2012

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

"Peaceful disarmament key to end violence in Jonglei"

Juba, 12 March 2012: The Government of the Republic of South Sudan today is launching the process of civilian disarmament in Jonglei State.

"The widespread possession, and use, of illegal weapons by the communities and the proliferation of small arms constitutes a significant threat to peace and security in South Sudan, and is seriously exacerbating inter-communal violence in Jonglei," said the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to South Sudan, Hilde F. Johnson.

The UN Mission to South Sudan supports the principle of collecting weapons held illegally within communities. Without addressing this issue, the cycle of violence in Jonglei will never end. However, the process will only be successful if it is carried out as part of a comprehensive approach to peace, justice and reconciliation, and includes protection of the communities by security forces.

"UNMISS will support a peaceful civilian disarmament process which involves communities voluntarily giving up their illegal weapons following sensitization from local community leaders and government officials," said the SRSG.

It is vital that the process is conducted in a sequenced manner simultaneously across all affected communities. "We are encouraged that the Government's strategy captures these elements. It is now critical that all stakeholders cooperate to make sure that the strategy is implemented as intended."

UNMISS therefore urges community leaders, Government officials and security forces to do their utmost to ensure that the disarmament process is undertaken in an orderly and safe manner, with respect for basic human rights. UNMISS will have both its peacekeepers and civilian teams present in Jonglei state to monitor developments during the disarmament process.

The SRSG reiterates her call on Government authorities and communities in Jonglei State to show commitment to peace. "I urge the communities to work with the Peace Committee for Jonglei to bring an end to the violence. A pro-active reconciliation process and peaceful disarmament is the only way forward to maintain peace and security for the people of the area," said SRSG Johnson.

For further information,

Please contact UNMISS Spokesperson a.i.: Kouider Zerrouk, Email: zerrouk@un.org . Phone: + (211) 912 396 539.

www.unmiss.unmissions.org, UNMISS Headquarters, UN House, Juba 03. P.O. Box 29, Juba, South Sudan