



# United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)

Media & Spokesperson Unit, Public Information Office

## PRESS STATEMENT

Sunday 4 November, 2012

### **Statement by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan, Hilde F. Johnson.**

UNMISS recently received official communication from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of South Sudan ordering one of its Human Rights Officers to leave the country within 48 hours.

The order is in breach of the legal obligations of the Government of the Republic of South Sudan under the Charter of the United Nations. I have therefore been in discussions with the highest levels of the Government of the Republic of South Sudan to seek clarification on the reasons behind the order and to protest against this decision. This has also been done in writing on 25 October, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. Today, I met with H. E. President Salva Kiir Maryadit and raised this matter. However, in spite of the Mission's efforts, the order has not been rescinded.

Given the constraints such an order imposes on the staff member's ability to work in the country, the staff member has been redeployed to the Regional Service Centre in Entebbe, pending a decision on her future status.

Human rights monitoring, investigation and reporting, and building capacity, is a core element of the mandate of UNMISS which must be protected. It is therefore important to allow the Mission's Human Rights Officers to carry out their mandate. Should there be any serious complaints or evidence related to individual staff members' conduct, we trust that the Government will bring this to our attention and follow due process in accordance with international obligations.

Human rights violations and discrimination were at the core of the South Sudanese struggle during decades of civil war. As reflected in the Transitional Constitution of South Sudan, respect for human dignity and - rights are also cornerstones of this new and independent nation. The United Nations is committed to continue assisting South Sudan in fulfilling this important promise to its people

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For further information or media enquiries please contact:  
A/Spokesperson-Kouider Zerrouk – [zerrouk@un.org](mailto:zerrouk@un.org) +211912396539  
Media Relations Officer - Shantal Persaud [persaud@un.org](mailto:persaud@un.org) (m) +211 912 177 59

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[www.unmiss.unmissions.org](http://www.unmiss.unmissions.org)

UN House Juba 03, P.O. Box 29, Juba, South Sudan