

Statement attributable to the Spokesman for the Secretary-General on South Sudan

The Secretary-General has received Major General (retired) Patrick Cammaert's report on the Independent Special Investigation into the violence in Juba in July 2016 and the actions of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), including its response to acts of sexual violence in and around the Protection of Civilians (PoC) sites at UN House and the attack on the Terrain camp.

The Special Investigation found that UNMISS did not respond effectively to the violence due to an overall lack of leadership, preparedness and integration among the various components of the mission. The Special Investigation also found that command and control arrangements were inadequate, while peacekeepers maintained a risk-averse posture. These factors contributed to the failure of UNMISS to respond to the attack by Government soldiers on the Terrain camp on 11 July and protect civilians under threat. The Special Investigation was unable to verify allegations that peacekeepers failed to respond to acts of sexual violence committed directly in front of them on 17 and 18 July.

The Special Investigation found that UNMISS faced an extremely challenging set of circumstances and was caught in the crossfire of an active and particularly violent conflict. During the three days of fighting, according to some conservative estimates, at least 73 people were killed, including more than 20 internally displaced persons in the PoC sites. Two peacekeepers were killed and several more were injured. One hundred and eighty-two buildings in the UN House compound were struck by bullets, mortars and rocket propelled grenades.

The Secretary-General is deeply distressed by these findings. He reiterates his outrage over the acts of violence committed in Juba in July and the continuing betrayal of the people of South Sudan by too many of its leaders. The Secretary-General recognises that UNMISS has saved hundreds of thousands of lives over the past three years, including in its PoC sites, and commends the Mission's personnel for their dedication. He is, nonetheless, alarmed by the serious shortcomings identified by the Special Investigation, which were evident in the mission's failure to fully implement its mandate to protect civilians and UN staff during the fighting.

The Secretary-General has studied the recommendations made by the Special Investigation and intends to implement them. The Secretary-General will ensure that the necessary steps are taken to enable UNMISS to protect civilians more effectively, including through greater accountability of the mission's civilian and uniformed leadership.

The Secretary-General has transmitted the Executive Summary of General Cammaert's report to members of the Security Council, which was also released publicly today.

New York, 1 November 2016