



# United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)

Media & Spokesperson Unit

Communications & Public Information Office

## PRESS RELEASE

Juba, 9 January 2014

### UNMISS SRSG FIRST VISIT TO MALAKAL SINCE FIGHTING STARTED

The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General (SRSG) and Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) traveled yesterday to Malakal, the capital of Upper Nile, where she met with the Governor of the State and UNMISS staff.

While on the UNMISS compound, the SRSG visited the protection site where 12,000 civilians are currently sheltered after seeking safety on the UNMISS base. She met with community leaders who expressed their concerns, but also their gratitude for the Mission's support and assistance. Ms. Hilde F. Johnson further went to the Indian field hospital which has been treating over a thousand casualties and witnessing the birth of ten babies since the beginning of the crisis.

While urging the people of South Sudan to put their differences aside and making a strong call for peace, the SRSG also praised the work of the UN staff in Malakal. "I commend your courage and dedication under such difficult circumstances" she said "and the commitment you have demonstrated to the people of South Sudan by sheltering 12,000 civilians on your base".

Since fighting erupted on 15 December, UNMISS has opened its compounds to 75,000 civilians fleeing the violence. There are currently 60,000 civilians sheltered on UNMISS bases throughout South Sudan.

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UNMISS has a mandate to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence when the national authorities and their security forces, who are primarily responsible, are not in a position to do so.

The UNMISS protection mandate is based on the principle of non-discrimination and applies to all civilians irrespective of who they are, where they come from or what their communal background is.