



United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)

Spokesperson & Media Relations Unit
Communications & Public Information Section

PRESS RELEASE

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Warring parties urged to stop suffering of people in Upper Nile, South Sudan as fighting intensifies

The warring parties in South Sudan have been urged by the head of the UN Mission in South Sudan, (UNMISS), David Shearer to “stop the suffering they are causing, take responsibility for the lives they have destroyed and to uphold their responsibility to protect civilians” as fighting intensifies once again in the north-eastern Upper Nile region.

Up to 25,000 people have reportedly fled their homes on the West Bank of the River Nile over the last few days following increased military activity. It is reported that thousands have fled to the town of Aburoc, 30 kilometres north of Kodok where there are now an estimated 50,000 people, although some are now trying to cross over the border into Sudan after government forces took control of Kodok on Wednesday.

On Monday, humanitarian workers were evacuated from Kodok to Aburoc following advice from South Sudanese forces on the ground. Last night those humanitarian workers continued to further locations. The Upper Nile region has been a focus of military activity over the last several months.

Mr Shearer, who is also the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, said: “I am extremely concerned for those estimated 50,000 displaced people currently thought to be in Aburoc. I call on the government SPLA forces to show restraint, avoid the death of innocent civilians and protect all South Sudanese citizens. I also urge any opposition fighters who may be hiding in the town to detach themselves, so the civilian population does not become a target.”





UNMISS is seeking to gain access to Aburoc as quickly as possible in order to assess the security situation. However, the mission was denied clearance by government SPLA forces on Thursday to launch an air patrol to the town.

Mr Shearer raised the issue of the ongoing conflict in Upper Nile region and other parts of South Sudan during his address to the UN Security Council in New York on Tuesday.

He told the 15-member Council that despite what appeared to be an attempt by the parties to achieve victory through military means, “a political solution is the only way forward for South Sudan.”

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