



Media & Spokesperson Unit, Public Information Office

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)**

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#### **REPORT ISSUED ON INTER-COMMUNAL VIOLENCE IN JONGLEI, SOUTH SUDAN**

The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) today released a report on the findings of its in-depth investigation into the inter-communal violence in Jonglei State, that claimed the lives of hundreds in 2011 and early 2012.

Entitled *Incidents of Inter-communal Violence in Jonglei State*, the 45-page report documents crimes and human rights violations that took place during the attacks, and provides nine recommendations to avert future major outbreaks of violence.

*“To end the cycle of violence in Jonglei for good, we need to understand what happened and make sure that the perpetrators are held accountable. This needs to be part of a comprehensive peace process in the state,”* said Hilde F. Johnson, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for South Sudan. *“We sincerely believe this report will make a positive contribution towards reconciliation among the communities in Jonglei.”*

The report was compiled by the Human Rights Division of UNMISS with support from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Human rights officers undertook 20 field missions to towns and rural areas of Jonglei State that were targeted by the violence, in particular those affected by the late December 2011 attacks by thousands of Lou Nuer armed youth on Murle settlements in Pibor County.

This was the latest in a cycle of tit-for-tat attacks by armed Murle and Lou Nuer against each other’s civilian populations, including in Pieri in August 2011. The attacks in Pibor County occurred over a 12-day period and triggered assaults by Murle youths against Lou Nuer and Bor Dinka communities elsewhere in the state in February 2012. The report covers this whole period.

UNMISS recorded 612 fatalities in the course of the attacks on Murle settlements and 276 deaths resulting from the attacks on the Lou Nuer and Dinka communities between 23 December 2011 and 4 February 2012. There were also incidents of abduction of children and women, tens of thousands were displaced and many homes were destroyed. As a matter of urgency, the report recommends the activation of the government’s Investigation Committee into the Jonglei State Crisis. It also calls for the prosecution of all those responsible for the violence.

*“It is vital that the facts are known, and that the perpetrators and instigators on all sides are held to account,”* said UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay, who visited Jonglei state in May and met with some victims and witnesses of the violence there. *“Every effort must be*

*made to implement the report's recommendations as they could make a very important contribution to improving respect for human rights and breaking the cycle of violence in Jonglei," she added.*

UNMISS carried out a series of extensive air and ground patrols that provided timely intelligence on the mobilization of armed youths and the destruction they inflicted on unarmed civilian populations in Jonglei. The mission also deployed troops alongside units of the Sudan People's Liberation Army, which helped save many lives in Pibor County in December 2011 and early January of this year. However, the report also points out that the delays in the SPLA-deployments, despite early warning by UNMISS, prevented adequate protection of civilians.

The report furthermore identifies constraints that prevented UNMISS from fulfilling more effectively its mandated responsibility to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence.

UNMISS calls on the South Sudanese government to develop a comprehensive, multi-faceted plan for curbing violence in Jonglei and establishing a more protective environment for local residents that demonstrates the benefits of a bolstered government presence. The peace process which has been launched already, the civilian disarmament and the investigation committee should all be incorporated into such a plan.

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The full report can be viewed or downloaded from the UNMISS website at:  
<http://unmiss.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?tabid=4969&language=en-US>

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