



United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)

Media & Spokesperson Unit

Communications & Public Information Office

PRESS RELEASE

9 June 2014

SRSG Johnson inaugurates new protection-of-civilians site in Malakal

The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General (SRSG) for South Sudan, Hilde F. Johnson, today inaugurated a new protection-of-civilians (PoC) site under UNMISS' protection and adjacent to the Mission's Base in the state capital Malakal.

Intended to relieve congestion in the existing site inside the UNMISS compound, the new facility has an area of 100,000 square metres and can accommodate between 8,000 and 9,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Of the estimated 19,000 civilians currently living inside the Mission's Malakal facilities, slightly over 3,100 had already moved to the new site as of last Saturday, 7 June and the SRSG hailed its opening as an excellent example of cooperation between UNMISS and its humanitarian partners..

"As long as people feel afraid, they can know they have our protection," said the SRSG during a ceremony in the context of the inauguration of the new PoC site. "That commitment remains, and UNMISS has received a new mandate from the UN Security Council where protection of civilians is not only important, it's a top priority."

UNMISS threw open its gates to all unarmed civilians facing an imminent threat of physical violence when the crisis in South Sudan erupted in Juba on 15 December 2013. Over 93,000 civilians are currently living in ten of the Mission's compounds nationwide, the largest number of IDPs to be housed by UNMISS since hostilities forced hundreds of thousands of South Sudanese residents to flee their homes.

A new PoC site adjacent to the United Nations House complex on the southwestern outskirts of Juba has also been opened where a large-scale relocation of IDPs from the Mission's Tomping compound to the new site is expected to take place during the second half of this month.

The trip marked the SRSG's second visit to Malakal this year, and during her stay Ms. Johnson met with Upper Nile State deputy governor Awer Dua Agany and the state government's cabinet of ministers and spoke to a number of IDPs.

"Today, 9 June, is the date of the meeting in Addis Ababa between His Excellency Salva Kiir Mayardit, President of the Republic of South Sudan, and Riek Machar Teny," she told reporters after seeing the deputy governor. "We really hope that progress will be made so that there will be full compliance with the cessation of hostilities agreement and major steps are taken towards comprehensive peace. Ultimately, it is peace and stability that will permit people to feel safe enough to return to their communities and neighborhoods."

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