



INFORMATION NOTE

UNMISS-supported southern Unity mobile court concludes in Leer

27 April 2026, Leer/Bentiu/Juba - The southern Unity mobile court in Leer, Unity state, has concluded its proceedings.

Since it began hearing cases on 23 March, the court addressed a total of 68 criminal and civil cases, including serious offences such as murder, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV), from Leer, Koch, Mayendit, and Panyijar counties. The court also heard several criminal cases arising in the Bentiu Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp, where many displaced persons from southern Unity currently reside.

Thirty-one criminal cases were adjudicated by the court, resulting in convictions of 18 individuals, while 20 were acquitted or had cases dismissed. Combined with the investigation phase that commenced on 9 March, the initiative also facilitated the release of 29 individuals who were wrongfully detained or had served their sentences. Of these, six cases involved members of the security forces.

Notably, the mobile court adjudicated 14 cases involving SGBV/CRSV, including both criminal and related civil matters. These resulted in four criminal convictions, alongside 19 divorces, including nine cases involving women subjected to SGBV-related harm such as forced marriage and domestic violence.

This included a landmark conviction of a militia member for CRSV committed during the January 2026 violence in Kaljak. This is only the second CRSV case tried across the seven Unity state mobile courts so far and the first involving a militia member.

An initiative led by the Unity State Government, the Judiciary of South Sudan (JOSS), and the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, with support from the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), the mobile court began hearing cases on 23 March 2026. It was funded by the Multi-Partner Trust Fund for Reconciliation, Stabilization and Resilience (RSRTF) and the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Juba.

A judge will be deployed by JOSS to Bentiu in May 2026, marking the first judicial presence in Unity state outside the mobile court framework in over a decade.

Notes to Editors:

- The southern Unity mobile court deployment builds on the 2025 Leer mobile court, which marked a significant expansion of access to justice for communities, particularly for women and girls.
- Since February 2024, UNMISS has supported the deployment of seven mobile courts across Unity state, including the first courts in Koch, Mayom, and Leer counties since 2013. The growing demand for justice also led to the establishment of a mobile court in Bentiu in December 2024. While no cases were decided by the formal justice system in Unity state in 2023, judges have since adjudicated 517 cases across these mobile courts, marking the gradual restoration of the formal justice system in the state after more than a decade.