



# PRESS RELEASE

## HOLIDAY MESSAGE BY UN SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE DAVID SHEARER

**JUBA, 23 December 2020** - This year has been one of the most challenging we may face in our lifetime given the severe impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on all our lives, right across the world. Whether we are UNMISS peacekeepers or citizens of South Sudan, we have all suffered. Some of us have lost family, friends and colleagues to the virus.

But COVID has also had a serious impact on our ability to carry out important activities, supporting communities across the country.

Despite this, UNMISS has remained committed to our lifesaving and lifechanging work in South Sudan. We stand strong beside you because we know that if our work stops, many more people will die from hunger, disease and conflict. They will be lost because of COVID-19.

It's been really pleasing to see some of the progress on the peace process this year. The Revitalized Government has been formed. States and counties have been allocated. And nine governors have been appointed. That's all positive, although it's taken much longer than we would have wished.

Meanwhile, many people continue to suffer because of the persistent problems plaguing the country, brought about by intercommunal conflict, flooding this year, and extreme poverty. There's still much we need to do to protect vulnerable civilians and build peace.

I'd like to thank all of you – the people of South Sudan – for being our partner in peace, for working alongside UNMISS to build a brighter future, one that is peaceful and, ultimately, prosperous for all citizens.

I'd like to wish you a very Merry Christmas for all of you who celebrate this occasion and a peaceful new year for those who don't. Please take care of yourselves and your families over the holiday season. I look forward to continuing our work with you in 2021.

***David Shearer is the Secretary-General's Special Representative for South Sudan and head of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).***