



# United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)

Media & Spokesperson Unit

Communications & Public Information Office

## PRESS RELEASE

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### SRSG Loej Visits Pibor

The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General (SRSG) for South Sudan and head of the UN Mission in South Sudan, Ellen Margrethe Loej, visited Pibor Town today and met with senior local officials, recently released child soldiers and UNMISS staff members assigned to the Mission's county support base.

The SRSG met with David Yau Yau, the chief administrator of the Greater Pibor Administrative Area and former commander of the South Sudan Democratic Movement/Army-Cobra Faction. Ms. Loej welcomed the release earlier this year of nearly 1,500 child soldiers who once fought with Mr. Yau Yau's militia and urged him to continue supporting efforts to secure the release of an estimated 500 child soldiers who are still associated with his Cobra Faction.

Over 500 of the former child soldiers have been reunited with their families, and the SRSG met with a group of them in Pibor Town.

"I am very encouraged by the success achieved by UNICEF and partners thus far in helping to obtain the release of these children, about a third of whom are 13 years old or younger," said the SRSG. "But our work has only just begun. In conjunction with local authorities, we must ensure that these children have access to educational and health facilities and are protected from any future attempt to enlist them again in any military organization."

The United Nations estimates that 13,000 children are associated with armed forces and groups nationwide, and credible evidence indicates that both of the warring parties have engaged in the recruitment of child soldiers since the current conflict began in December 2013.

During her visit, Ms. Loej also toured Pibor Town and received a briefing from UNMISS colleagues on the security and humanitarian situation in the greater Pibor area. She later hosted a town hall meeting with staff members of the Mission and UN agencies operating in the area.

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