

Statement attributable to the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator in South Sudan, Ms. Lise Grande

(Juba, 11 November 2011): The United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator in South Sudan, Ms. Lise Grande, has strongly condemned the aerial bombardment of Pariang County on 10 November and expressed serious concern about the impact of the bombing on the civilian population in the area. The bombardment struck a temporary camp for displaced and refugee populations in Yida, where more than 20,000 people have taken refuge from fighting in Southern Kordofan State in Sudan. Many of the people in Yida have travelled miles to escape violence and are in a highly vulnerable condition.

Five bombs hit the Yida area in the afternoon of 10 November, with two shells falling directly inside the perimeter of the Yida shelter site. One shell fell near a temporary school. The number of casualties has yet to be confirmed.

The World Food Programme (WFP) and implementing partners have been forced to suspend emergency food distributions underway at the time of the bombardment. “The 10 November attack in Yida has put innocent civilians at extreme risk” said Ms. Grande. “These people have walked for miles. They are fleeing violence in Southern Kordofan in search of safety and life-saving assistance. The bombing in Yida has severely disrupted the humanitarian operation just as we need to scale up our aid.”

The Humanitarian Coordinator confirmed that some humanitarian personnel have been evacuated from the area in the wake of the attack. A number of core humanitarian staff remain on the ground to ensure essential assistance continues, including provision of medical care, water and sanitation assistance, and distribution of airlifted food to the population. Humanitarian partners are planning to resume humanitarian assistance missions following an assessment of the security situation. Alternative sites to support the refugee and displaced population are also being prepared farther southwards into South Sudan.

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