



# United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)

Media & Spokesperson Unit, Communications & Public Information Office

## PRESS RELEASE

### **UNMISS is deeply concerned by the deteriorating situation in Pibor Town**

Juba, 14 May 2013: The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) is deeply concerned about the deteriorating security situation in and around Pibor town, Jonglei State. UNMISS strongly condemns the violence, looting and displacement affecting civilians and humanitarian organizations that have occurred in recent days in Pibor.

UNMISS is particularly alarmed by reports about the involvement in some of the incidents of allegedly defected and ill-disciplined members of security forces, as well as by statements issued by David Yau Yau's led armed group (South Sudan Democratic Movement/Army) demanding civilians to leave the towns of Pibor, in Jonglei, and Kapoeta, in Eastern Equatoria State.

In public statements respectively issued on 2, 6 and 13 May 2013, the SSDM/A (David Yau Yau), demanded civilians and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) to leave Kapoeta and Pibor towns within a week, and referred to warnings of an imminent attack on both towns. Similarly, reports have been received of armed elements telling civilians in Pibor town of an imminent attack and prompting them to leave. These developments have led to significant displacement of the civilian population out of Pibor town.

UNMISS received reports of looting of civilian dwellings in the town on 9 May, with more incidents of widespread looting reported on 11 and 12 May. The premises of a number of humanitarian organizations, including a medical facility, as well as facilities where the United Nations had pre-positioned food stocks for humanitarian assistance, were looted. The looting was reportedly perpetrated by a range of groups, including defected elements from the Wildlife Service, ill-disciplined SPLA soldiers, elements from non-state armed actors and individual criminal elements.

The Government of South Sudan has the primary responsibility to protect the population. UNMISS calls on the civilian and military authorities, at the national, Jonglei State and Pibor County levels, to immediately take control of the situation, take action against any perpetrators and hold them to account. UNMISS has reported these incidents to the SPLA and has demanded, at the highest level, that necessary measures be taken urgently.

UNMISS troops were patrolling Pibor town already before the looting started. UNMISS has reinforced its presence in Pibor town with additional troops and deployed a military unit to protect pre-positioned food stocks. UNMISS peacekeepers also have clear instructions to assist in protecting the civilian population in Pibor.

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