



# PRESS RELEASE

## **Civilians in South Sudan continue to bear the brunt of sub-national violence**

**Juba, 17 April 2025** – Civilians in South Sudan continue to bear the brunt of violence, with a concerning 51 percent increase in victims harmed by conventional parties to the conflict and other armed groups, as well as a similar rise in incidents of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) documented in the 2024 annual brief by the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

Between January and December 2024, UNMISS documented 1,019 violent incidents affecting 3,657 civilians, with 1,561 killed, 1,299 injured, 551 abducted, and 246 subjected to CRSV. This marks a 15 percent increase in violent incidents (from 885 to 1019) and a nine percent increase in victims (from 3,340 to 3,657) as compared with 2023.

Armed communal violence by community-based militias and/or civil defense groups remained the leading cause of harm against civilians, accounting for 79 percent of victims. Consistently, Warrap State recorded the highest number of civilian deaths and injuries, whereas Western Equatoria State documented the highest number of sexual violence.

The majority of abductions took place in Central Equatoria State, mainly by alleged members of National Salvation Front splinter groups, followed by Jonglei State, allegedly by Murle armed elements.

“Protecting civilians and preventing violence requires urgent action by authorities at the national, state and local levels as well as by communities to address the root causes of conflict and find non-violent solutions. Promoting dialogue, reconciliation and social cohesion is critical to defusing tensions and building trust,” said Nicholas Haysom, the Secretary-General’s Special Representative to South Sudan and the Head of UNMISS.

The Mission notes that the Government of South Sudan bears primary responsibility to protect civilians and calls on national and state authorities to take appropriate measures to end violence, defuse tensions, and hold perpetrators accountable.

UNMISS supports these efforts by conducting thousands of peacekeeping patrols by land, air, and river each year. The Mission also supports community efforts to promote reconciliation and peacebuilding through dialogue and actively assists political and peace processes, including security and justice sector reform, constitution-making, and preparations for elections.

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