



# United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)

Media & Spokesperson Unit  
Communications & Public Information Office

## PRESS RELEASE

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### UNMISS refutes Ministry of Health's remarks on number of deaths in Protection of Civilians Sites

The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) wishes to clarify remarks attributed by local media to South Sudan's Minister of Health Dr, Riek Gai Kok regarding the number of deaths in the protection of civilians (POC) site in Juba and procedures for burial.

The Minister reportedly claimed during a briefing that *"20-30 children...die every day at UNMISS protection of civilians (PoC) site in Juba"*. UNMISS would like to clarify that, each week, fewer than five people die among the nearly-30,000 civilians in the Juba POC site. Some of those who pass away are unfortunately children, who mostly die from illness. These mortality figures are considerably below the accepted emergency threshold in any community.

Furthermore, all health activities carried out within the POC sites are coordinated through the Health Cluster, of which the National Ministry of Health is a member, and carried out in accordance with the Ministry's own standards. During the recent cholera outbreak that started outside the POC site, there were no deaths among the cholera patients inside the site.

The Ministry of Health is at liberty to provide services in the POC sites, and has previously on an ad hoc basis contributed drugs for vaccination and treatment programs, and participated in a measles campaign in the Juba site.

The Minister also reportedly claimed that UNMISS has contracted organizations to conduct burials illegally without the knowledge of the Ministry of Health. UNMISS would like to clarify that the process for handling bodies of the deceased in the Juba POC site is overseen by Juba Teaching Hospital and a humanitarian partner working in the POC site. Following an examination of the body by Juba Teaching Hospital and the issuance of a death certificate under South Sudanese law, the burial is either conducted by the family or by the Juba Teaching Hospital. UNMISS does not take part in the process, but has always undertaken to ensure respect for South Sudanese law and custom with regard to burial rites.

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