



PRESS RELEASE

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International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

Juba, 25 November 2012 – 25 November marks the International Day to End Violence Against Women. To commemorate the occasion, South Sudan will embark on 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence under a national theme, **“Promote Peace at Home, Stop Gender Based Violence and Child Marriage”**.

In South Sudan, at least four out of ten women have experienced one or more forms of violence, with many more cases going unreported. Displacements due to conflict and natural disasters, coupled with high levels of food insecurity, exacerbate the incidence of gender based violence across the country. Alarming, studies show that 8 out of 10 South Sudanese seem to have tolerance for violence against women.

Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) calls for a greater respect for the rights of women and girls, urging countries to take measures to protect them from gender based violence, and to support their participation in peace negotiations and post-conflict reconstruction. The UN Security Council has, through its resolution 1960, also requested separate country level mechanisms to monitor and report on incidences of conflict related to sexual violence, both in South Sudan and in other countries.

“Sexual and Gender based violence is a violation of every girl’s and woman’s rights. A concerted collective effort is needed to protect South Sudanese girls and women from these abuses. That is why we commend the South Sudanese Government for initiating the 16 days of activism against gender based violence campaign”, UN Special Representative Hilde F. Johnson said. She also commended the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare for its leadership, and the progress that has been made on gender policy. The recently validated strategic framework is critical for the implementation of the National Gender Policy in the country.

The UN family in South Sudan is committed to assisting with the prevention of sexual and gender based violence and in putting the gender policy into practice that will lead to tangible results for women and girls in the country. Through strong partnerships between government, NGOs, and communities, prevention and response programs will be put in place that enhance the rights of women and girls, and help them live free from the threat of violence. Over 200 community health workers have been trained in the clinical management of rape, and many communities have been reached through mobilization programmes to prevent violence, especially among the most vulnerable, such as internally displaced persons. The UN has also brought women together in community peacebuilding forums at the state level to address indifference, inequality and impunity, that allow gender- based violence to continue.

As mandated by the Security Council and together with other partners, UNMISS is building the capacity of state level institutions to monitor, investigate and report incidents of conflict-related sexual violence. Through the active engagement of Women Protection Advisors, UNMISS is also reporting on such violations to the Security Council.

The 16 days of activism present an opportunity for all women, girls, boys and men to advocate and peacefully raise a collective voice against all forms of violence against women. The UN family stands together with Government, civil society, community groups, institutions and NGOs across the country to bring an end to gender based violence, and for a peaceful future for all in South Sudan.

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