



INFORMATION NOTE

South Sudan deploys first mobile court to Leer in over a decade

LEER/JUBA, 14 April 2025 – For the first in over a decade, the government is deploying judges, prosecutors, and investigators to Leer County in Unity State to deliver formal justice through a mobile court from 15 April to 9 May 2025.

The joint initiative of the Judiciary of South Sudan, the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, and the Unity State government is supported by the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS.)

The Leer mobile court aims to address serious criminal cases, including murder, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV), and forced and early marriage. To underscore the importance of justice delivery, the Governor of Unity State and senior representatives from the Judiciary, Ministry of Justice, South Sudan National Police Service (SSNPS), and National Prisons Service of South Sudan (NPSSS) are expected to join the opening of the court on 15 April.

The deployment follows the training of 20 new investigators in southern Unity, with a focus on handling SGBV and CRSV-related offences. On 28 March, UNMISS facilitated the advance deployment of prosecutors and investigators to begin receiving and processing criminal complaints. More than 60 cases had already been reported prior to the arrival of the court, and additional cases are expected to follow. The court is expected to handle a combination of criminal and civil matters.

“Mobile courts, while not a substitute for formal justice structures, play a vital and innovative role in restoring public faith in South Sudan’s rule of law architecture,” said Guang Cong, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (Political), UNMISS.

The Multi-Partner Trust Fund for Reconciliation, Stabilization and Resilience (RSRTF) and the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Juba have provided financial resources for the Leer mobile court.

Note to Editors:

Since 2013, sustained conflict and insecurity have forced the withdrawal of judges from Unity State. In their absence, residents have relied entirely on customary courts to resolve disputes, including serious crimes beyond their jurisdiction. Leer county, one of the areas hardest hit by conflict, has had no access to formal justice mechanisms for over a decade.

In 2024, UNMISS supported the government in deploying four mobile courts across Unity State, including the first courts in Koch and Mayom counties since independence. While no cases were decided by the formal justice system in Unity State in 2023, judges decided 257 cases in 2024. The growing demand for justice also prompted the Governor to support a mobile court in Bentiu in December 2024.

We hope your organizations can travel or work with media colleagues in these locations to cover this initiative.

--

Contact: UNMISS Spokesperson, Priyanka Chowdhury at chowdhury20@un.org (link sends e-mail) or unmiss-spokesperson@un.org