

**Statement to the Security Council on South Sudan**

**24 February 2015**

**Monsieur le Président,**

1. Merci de cette nouvelle opportunité qui m'est offerte de vous présenter le rapport du Secrétaire général sur le Soudan du Sud publié le 17 février. Je souhaiterais également profiter de cette occasion pour informer le Conseil des derniers développements opérationnels survenus depuis lors.

Monsieur le Président,

2. Comme vous le savez, la situation sécuritaire au Soudan du Sud reste très inquiétante. De nombreuses violations de l'Accord de cessation des hostilités signé le 23 janvier 2014 sont rapportées et confirmées, ainsi que de nombreux affrontements entre le gouvernement et les forces d'opposition dans les États d'Unité et du Haut-Nil. Le 10 février dans l'État d'Unité, de nombreux bombardements ont été signalés par la MINUSS dans la région de Madrassa (sud-ouest de la ville de Bentiu). L'armée populaire de libération du Soudan (SPLA) a rapporté avoir ouvert le feu après avoir observé une avancée de l'Armée populaire de libération du Soudan en opposition (SPLAiO) sur la ville de Bentiu. La MINUSS n'a pu confirmer cette

avancée sur les lignes de défense de l'APLS autour de Bentiu. Le 13 février, l'APLS a de même capturé au moins cinq membres de l'opposition armée suite à des affrontements entre Bentiu et Guit, et les garde en détention.

3. De même, dans l'État du Haut-Nil, la situation sécuritaire a été récemment dominée par des échanges de feu soutenus entre l'APLS et l'opposition armée des 8 au 17 février dans la région de Nasir, au-delà de la rivière Sobat. On signale également de nouveaux affrontements dans les comtés de Maban, Melut et Manyo depuis le 10 février. Les affrontements dans ces états indiquent clairement que les gisements pétroliers qui y sont localisés restent des cibles privilégiées pour les forces de l'Opposition armée.

4. Les deux camps continuent également à mobiliser et engager de nouvelles recrues en préparation à de nouveaux affrontements, alors que l'avancée dans la saison sèche ouvre de nouveaux axes de communication et le déplacement de troupes et d'équipements. Le 15 février, la MINUSS a été informée que des hommes armés, appartenant probablement une milice Shiluk alliée au gouvernement, auraient recruté de force au moins 89 enfants issus de camps de déplacés du comté de Malakal (État du Haut-Nil). Des témoins oculaires ont signalé à

l'UNICEF que des hommes armés ont encerclé la zone et recherchaient dans chaque maison les garçons âgés de plus de 12 ans.

5. Au même moment, dans le comté de Pibor dans l'État de Jonglei, la lente intégration des forces Murle et l'absence de transfert des ressources financières promises à l'administration de la région du Grand Pibor a le potentiel de déstabiliser l'accord du 28 mars entre la faction Cobra du Mouvement de libération du Soudan du Sud menée par David Yau Yau et le Gouvernement. La nomination de Joshua Konyi comme Commandant de l'APLS dans la région a également attisé les tensions car Konyi, un ancien commissaire du comté de Pibor, avait travaillé de concert avec l'APLS contre les forces de Yau Yau dans la région. Nous avons également reçu des rapports selon lesquels la communauté Murle aurait passé un accord avec les Lou Nuers pour empêcher les troupes de l'APLS de se déplacer dans leurs régions, si ces derniers envisageaient d'entreprendre des manœuvres en direction des régions sous le contrôle de l'opposition armée. De fait, il y a de grands risques que le conflit se propage dans les mois qui viennent aux comtés de Pibor et Akobo, dans l'état de Jonglei.

6. La tension monte également dans la région de l'Equatoria, en raison de l'entrée massive de nomades Dinka lourdement armés, avec plus de 250,000 têtes de bétail, venant de l'état de Jonglei et de l'état des Lacs sur les terres arables de leurs voisins. Ces mouvements sont dus aux affrontements qui ont lieu dans les régions de pâturage traditionnels situées au sud des États des Lacs et de Jonglei. Les points chauds dans ces états pourraient aisément se transformer en zones de conflit.

7. Par ailleurs, des disputes politiques internes à la coalition gouvernementale dans les États du Bahr El Ghazal du nord et de l'ouest ont abouti à la récusation respective du gouverneur par intérim et du Président de l'assemblée législative locale. Ces tensions pourraient malheureusement également déboucher sur de nouveaux conflits intercommunautaires dans deux états restés jusqu'à présent relativement paisibles malgré le climat conflictuel qui règne dans le pays.

Mr. President,

8. The volatile security environment is a direct illustration of the parties' continued lack of political will. The Government and Opposition do not seem to take the political negotiations seriously and

appear unwilling to make the necessary compromises. The situation at the peace talks in Addis Ababa cannot be described any other way but as a serious failure of leadership that remains focused on its pursuit for power rather than care of its people. The talks are stalled over the three key issues: power-sharing, security arrangements and constitutional reforms. The likelihood of either side softening its stance remains low.

9. On 21 January in Arusha, the parties signed an agreement to unify the SPLM, following talks facilitated by Chama Cha Mapenduzi (CCM), the ruling party in Tanzania. On 16 February, the parties signed another document, including a roadmap matrix with specific timelines, to implement the Arusha Agreement. However, in view of the prevailing environment and uncompromising positions expressed by President Kiir and Riek Machar, the actual implementation of the matrix is doubtful.

10. On 13 February, the Government announced that it would postpone the General and Presidential Elections by two years and propose to the National Legislature a constitutional amendment extending the terms of the Office of the President and the National Legislature, until 9 July 2017. On 19 February, the Government

presented the proposed bill for the amendment of the 2011 Transitional Constitution to members of both houses, the National Legislative Assembly and the Council of State, who had been recalled from recess for an extra-ordinary sitting. Members now have one month to scrutinize the proposal, following which the bill would require passage by a two-third majority in both houses sitting separately. Given the majority enjoyed by the Government in the Legislature, this proposal is likely to be adopted. This step is a response to the perceived strategy of the Opposition to call into question the legitimacy of the Government and President after June 2015, and officially, so that 'it does not have to negotiate under pressure'. I am concerned that this two-year timeline may become another incentive to defer the reaching of compromises necessary for a peace agreement.

11. Lastly, Mr. President, the visible shrinking of political space and freedoms is worrying. Journalists have been detained and harassed for criticizing the Government. The Nation Mirror newspaper was closed down on 3 February, after publishing an article that claimed Government forces had abandoned a key town near the international border with Sudan. On 16 February, even UN Radio Miraya was threatened with shutdown, if it continued interviewing Opposition leaders. The

situation has since been addressed by Special Representative Ellen M. Løj in a meeting with South Sudan's Minister of Information. However, the United Nations remain concerned about the general trend of shrinking press freedom in the country. Opposition political parties also continue to be prevented from participating in the Addis Ababa peace talks.

Mr. President,

12. The humanitarian situation in South Sudan is at high risk of deteriorating further over the coming months. UNMISS currently hosts over 110,000 IDPs in eight POC sites, with an additional 1.5 million displaced across South Sudan and close to 500,000 outside the country. As fighting continues, displacement is increasing. About 100,000 people were displaced over the past two months alone, in a period of relative calm. Meanwhile, the number of food-insecure civilians is expected to rise further as we approach the lean season. About 2.5 million people are already in emergency and crisis levels of food insecurity - almost twice as many as in December 2013 when the crisis broke out - and an additional 3.9 million people are in a state of stress when it comes to food security. In line with seasonal patterns, a drastic deterioration could occur between April and

July this year, when the lean season reaches its peak. Conflict-affected states are most at risk, as markets are destroyed and foods stocks depleted prematurely. While all efforts are being made to bring assistance to those in need, insecurity and harassment, especially to national humanitarian staff, are hampering response efforts.

13. As I stated in my last briefing, UNMISS continues to take every opportunity to move from protection "by location" to protection "by presence". Its emphasis is increasingly on conducting dynamic, integrated patrols to enhance the protection and reassurance of local communities, and to gather vital information to facilitate the formulation of appropriate and timely responses to emerging threats. Last month alone, UNMISS conducted over 5,000 short-duration, long duration, dismounted, Force Protection, integrated and dynamic air patrols throughout South Sudan. The vast majority of these patrols were focused on positive and proactive engagement with vulnerable communities outside UNMISS bases.

14. The establishment of temporary operating bases in key population centres is part of this strategy. UNMISS is currently assessing options for establishing forward-operating bases in Bentiu, Malakal and Bor, and

is seeking the approval of local authorities for this purpose. UNMISS has prepared contingency plans in the event of a worsening security situation. These plans rely on maintaining Quick Reaction Forces at high levels of readiness to respond swiftly and robustly to emerging threats. All battalions are foreseen to exercise flexibility for reinforcements anywhere within South Sudan.

15. 3,468 of the 5,500 newly authorized troops have now been deployed, and the full deployment of infantry troops and enablers is expected to be completed by April. This would enable UNMISS to further expand its presence in the country. Six out of the nine utility helicopters have been deployed, and the deployment of tactical helicopter units from Ethiopia and Rwanda is being pursued. Further, the deployment of the Chinese battalion and additional troops from Kenya is currently underway, while the balance of troops from Ghana and a Riverine Unit from Bangladesh are scheduled to deploy in the near future.

Mr. President,

16. UNMISS continued to experience SOFA violations, including restrictions of movement; impounding of assets; threats to UNMISS personnel and premises; assaults, harassment and arrest as well as detention of

personnel; and importation restrictions of contingent-owned equipment. The Factsheet on SOFA violations, circulated yesterday, provides a detailed breakdown on the types of violations that occurred in January.

Mr. President,

17. In light of the fragile security environment, the ongoing round of peace talks is not likely to achieve much progress. There is now an urgent need to reinforce the mediation efforts, as well as to impose consequences on the parties if they fail to show willingness to compromise, and continue engaging in a conflict that will result in further loss of innocent lives. Even more important in this regard is the need for accountability for war crimes and crimes against humanity, which cannot go unpunished. Accountability is indispensable for long-term peace and reconciliation. For the culture of impunity to end, those responsible for continuing it must be brought to justice. As the peace talks have just resumed, I urge the Council to consider issuing a strong Presidential Statement calling on the parties to immediately cease all military operations and make the necessary compromises to reach a comprehensive peace agreement during this round of talks, or face the consequences.

*Updated as of 24 February 2015*

*Check against delivery*

Thank you.



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