



PRESS RELEASE

UNMISS expresses deep concern at ongoing violence in Pibor

Juba, 16 May 2021: The Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Nicholas Haysom, has expressed deep concern over the fresh escalation of violence in the Greater Pibor Administrative Area.

“We are alarmed by the renewed violence between community-based militias, similar to the serious conflict witnessed in early 2020, the likelihood of revenge attacks, further displacement of thousands of civilians, and threats to life-saving food aid stationed in the area,” said Mr. Haysom.

A human rights report issued by UNMISS, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights found that, during January and August 2020, thousands of fighters from Dinka, Nuer and Murle militias conducted coordinated attacks on villages, killing and wounding hundreds of civilians. Women and children were also abducted, and dozens of women were raped.

The SRSG acknowledged the consultations carried out by the Government’s High-Level Committee, headed by Vice President Dr. James Wani Igga, in response to the 2020 violence. He called on the Government to prevent a repeat of this violence, to take steps to address the root causes, and fulfil its responsibility to protect civilians.

“UNMISS is doing everything it can to protect displaced families as well as humanitarian personnel and supplies,” said Mr. Haysom. “However, the protection of citizens, wherever they are, from militia violence is first and foremost the responsibility of the Government and its security officials.”

The sudden escalation of violence has led to increased displacement and the suspension of humanitarian operations in Gumuruk and Verteth, where food was being distributed.

“Any looting or destruction of food, storage facilities and humanitarian vehicles would be catastrophic for communities already experiencing the highest level of food insecurity in the country,” said Mr. Haysom.

UNMISS is continuing to establish temporary bases and intensify patrols in the affected areas to deter violence. It is working with political and traditional leaders to promote reconciliation through peace conferences and is supporting efforts to secure the release of abducted women and children. The multi-donor peacebuilding trust fund is also being used to help reduce tensions over access to resources by improving basic services within the affected communities.