

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

ASG Mulet's statement to the Security Council

on South Sudan

(6 August 2014)

Mr. President,

1. Thank you for the opportunity to present the Report of the Secretary-General. I will provide a brief update on the latest developments since the publication of the Report on 25 July. In conjunction, an update on SOFA violations for the month of June has already been circulated on 1 August.

2. The first major incident, since the 9 May and 10 June meetings of President Kiir and Riek Machar, took place in Nassir, Upper Nile State. On 20 July, forces affiliated with the SPLM/A in Opposition launched an attack on Nassir. Fighting continued until 24 July when the SPLA repelled the Opposition forces. The two sides clashed again on 26 July. Currently, the SPLA remains in control of Nassir, firing artillery and other weapons towards the surrounding areas primarily to deter opposition forces from regrouping and launching a counter attack.

3. Furthermore, skirmishes between the SPLA and opposition elements have also been taking place in Renk, also in Upper Nile State, and in Ayod, Jonglei State. On 16 July in Aweil, Northern Bahr El Ghazal State, UNMISS received reports of clashes between the

Government security forces and approximately 200 SPLA deserters who had abandoned their posts due to the lack of payment of salaries. On 2 August, in Bunj, Maban Country in Upper Nile State, clashes erupted between a local militia that calls itself the Maban Defence Force and approximately 20 SPLA soldiers (of Nuer ethnicity) who deserted from SPLA. The militia suffered heavy casualties during the fight. In reaction to this clash, the militia began pursuing Nuers in Bunj and surrounding areas including, regrettably, those working for UN Agencies as well as INGOs. Since the fighting started, UN personnel and aid workers have moved to the compounds of UN agencies and INGOs for protection from the militia, while thousands of displaced civilians have sought refuge in a refugee camp near the airstrip. Sadly, initial reports indicate that 5 humanitarian workers of Nuer ethnicity have so far been killed by the militia and one is missing.

4. A Quick Reaction Force (QRF) with four armoured personnel carriers (APCs) is about to reach the area and another platoon size force is being deployed by air. The extraction of non-essential UN and humanitarian personnel via airlift has begun. NGO employees of Nuer ethnicity remain inside some of the compounds and will be escorted to the airstrip as soon as force protection arrives in Bunj. This incident also demonstrates the fragile environment where violence can quickly engulf communities not originally involved in the conflict.

5. The situation on the ground, therefore, remains precarious, with a risk of further polarization and the conflict spreading to other parts of the country. In this environment of insecurity, UNMISS also continues to encounter movement restrictions, especially in high risk areas.

6. In Bentiu, Unity State, local SPLA troops have repeatedly obstructed movements of UN personnel and IDPs around the UNMISS protection site. UNMISS flights out of Bentiu have also been cancelled several times due to the denial of flight safety assurances.

Mr. President,

7. UNMISS today is hosting more than 95,000 IDPs at its sites, comprising some 40,000 in Bentiu, 31,000 in Juba, and 17,000 in Malakal. With the prolonged presence of this considerable number of people at the facilities which were not built for such a purpose, conditions have become extremely challenging. Heavy rains have severely flooded large areas in the Bentiu and Malakal POC Sites, exacerbating the health and sanitation situation. There have been a number of incidents including serious crimes as well as incidents compromising the safety of UN personnel. A significant amount of resources, both military and material, are being expended to manage these sites. In addition, the Mission continues to incur financial expenses not budgeted as part of its mandate. While a voluntary and dignified

return to their homes in safety remains the ultimate objective, the situation on the ground and the pace of the peace process indicate that this displacement is likely to continue for a relatively prolonged period of time. The status quo, therefore, is not sustainable and alternative options must be explored.

8. We have commenced discussions with UN Agencies and humanitarian partners to better delineate roles and responsibilities in an effort to enable the Mission to focus on its core mandate as prescribed in resolution 2155 (2014). In the meantime, the Mission continues to encourage the IDPs to relocate to newly constructed sites in order to decongest the existing ones.

Mr. President,

9. The deployment of additional troops authorized under resolution 2155 (2014) is well in progress. As of 4 August, a total of 3,525 out of the 5,500 surge troops have been deployed. The remaining contingents, including an infantry battalion, three military utility helicopters, three additional aircrafts and a tactical helicopter unit are expected to deploy by October.

10. We have also identified police contributing countries for the deployment of four Formed Police Units (FPUs), comprising a total of

660 personnel. The generation of the fresh FPU is expected to take approximately six months. Until then, the three FPUs currently on the ground will remain, together with individual police officers (IPOs) assisting with the maintenance of public safety and security within the UNMISS protection of civilian sites.

11. UNMISS continues to provide logistical support to the IGAD monitoring and verification teams, now deployed in Bor in Jonglei State, Bentiu and Pariang in Unity State, and Malakal, Nassir, and Melut in Upper Nile State. These monitors have been conducting patrols, with the support of UNMISS, while the regional troops with an additional responsibility to provide protection for the monitors have begun to arrive.

Mr. President,

12. The scale of humanitarian operations in South Sudan has reached the point that it now constitutes the biggest aid operation inside any single country. However, the capacity and funding of the humanitarian operation falls far short in the face of overwhelming needs. Some 3.9 million people are facing alarming levels of food insecurity, amidst growing concerns of a famine. 1.1 million people have been internally displaced by violence and fear, and 434,000 have fled across borders. Up to 50,000 children are at risk of dying as a consequence of acute malnutrition this year alone. The cholera epidemic continues to grow,

with more than 5,300 cases, including 115 deaths. While humanitarian assistance has been able to reach some 2.4 million people, aid efforts have been hampered by insecurity, obstructed access, insufficient and delayed funding, and delayed logistic, human resource and political constraints. The deteriorating humanitarian situation also carries with it, security implications as communities begin to compete for diminishing resources.

Mr. President,

13. The IGAD-led talks between the Government and the SPLM/A in Opposition, resumed on 4 August. The objective is to engage in all inclusive negotiations on issues of security and humanitarian access; political transition and the establishment of a Government of National Unity; justice, reconciliation and healing; and the parameters of a new Constitution for the country. Right now the parties are engaged in security talks focusing on the implementation of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement.

14. The IGAD Mediation will have to tackle several challenges including the need to align the positions of all IGAD member states on the application of sanctions against those who continue to undermine the peace process should the need arise.

15. In the face of the unfolding humanitarian crisis in South Sudan, it will be important to make good on previous statements and hold the parties to account for any further delays in the peace process.

Mr. President,

16. After three years of independence, South Sudan is on the brink of a humanitarian catastrophe and a protracted internal conflict. This is a man-made crisis, and those responsible for it have been slow in resolving it. Both sides continue to believe that they can achieve more through the pursuit of a military option. There is an urgent need for the international community to speak with one voice to incentivise the parties on a meaningful participation in the peace talks, but more importantly, caution them with one voice on the consequences of impeding the peace process as well as on the futility of pursuing the military option. The visit of the Security Council to South Sudan is particularly timely in this regard. The parties must reach an agreement, without a further delay, on how to end the conflict and embark on the path of reconciliation. Those responsible for committing serious human rights violations must be held accountable. Both sides must also ensure unhindered and safe access by road, air, and river for UN and humanitarian personnel. While UNMISS continues to carry out its mandate, the four objectives identified in resolution 2155 – protection of civilians, promotion of human rights and accountability, facilitation of humanitarian assistance, and support for the cessation of hostilities –

should be a collective responsibility of the UN and its partners, member states, and most importantly, the South Sudanese leaders.

Thank you, Mr. President.