



Press Release

Ref: 200909

UN raises new concerns about increasing LRA attacks in Southern Sudan

(11 September 2009, Juba) The United Nations Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary General and Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Sudan, Ms. Ameerah Haq, has expressed grave concern about the increasing number of deaths due to the escalating attacks by rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) against civilians - mostly women and children - in Southern Sudan's Western and Central Equatoria States.

The attacks by the LRA rebels within Southern Sudan, and also north-eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Central Africa Republic (CAR), have in recent months caused a marked increase in the numbers of IDPs and refugees in eight out of 10 counties of Western Equatoria State and two of the six counties in Central Equatoria State.

During the last six weeks alone, 11 incidents of LRA attacks have been reported - seven of them in the first week of September alone. The frequency of the attacks and the worsening plight of the population is disturbing.

Since the resurgence of the LRA attacks in mid-December 2008:

- 68,000 people have been internally displaced;
- 18,000 refugees have arrived from the DRC and CAR;
- At least 200 people have been killed and 130 abducted; and
- Within the last month alone, 11,000 IDPs have been registered in the two states.

Ms. Haq said: "The situation cannot be allowed to continue like this. Many innocent people are losing their lives every week, and the United Nations is very concerned about the killing, abduction, maiming and displacement of innocent civilians in the area. We call upon the perpetrators to stop this violence against civilians especially women and children, and find a solution to the conflict. We also call upon the government to strengthen protection of the civilian population and ensure a safe environment so that humanitarian agencies can access the people in need".

Since the start of 2009, the UN has mounted a major humanitarian operation involving six UN agencies and a large number of NGOs to meet humanitarian needs of the affected people in Western and Central Equatoria States. To date:

- Approximately 1,514 Metric Tonnes of food aid has been distributed to 72,000 affected people in Western Equatoria State alone;
- 20,000 IDPs and refugees have received non-food items in both states.

"The worsening humanitarian situation in Western Equatoria State demands a long-term

solution to the LRA insurgency”, said Ms Haq, adding that the United Nations remains committed to support peace negotiations as a way to resolving the conflict.

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