



Southern Sudan News Bulletin

**An Overview of UN Activities in Southern Sudan
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Highlights:

- Joint military offensive continues
- DDR unveils Eastern Equatoria office
- GoSS ministers hold briefing on public service reforms
- Salva Kiir opens Wau electricity plant
- Conflict resolved in Malakal

Sector I – Juba

DDR unveils Eastern Equatoria office

On 6 February, the Sector I Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) unit inaugurated the Eastern Equatoria DDR office at a colorful ceremony in the state capital of Torit, hosted by the Eastern Equatoria State Minister for Social Development.

Other dignitaries who attended the event included the Chairperson of the Southern Sudan DDR Commission (SSDDRC), the DDR unit's Regional Coordinator for the south, the Sector I Commander and Head of Office as well as several senior state government officials.

In his speech, the SSDDRC Chairperson William Deng Deng reiterated the need for DDR of former SPLA combatants to enable them to obtain the necessary skills for post-war life as civilians. He also asked the UN to offer more support for recovery outside the DDR area. In this regard, he noted the willingness of local communities to disarm and said that he expected the UNMIS DDR unit to support government efforts in this area.

The ceremony was witnessed by UN Deputy Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator Lise Grande and representatives of the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS), including SSDDRC chairperson Deng, and Eastern Equatoria State Governor Brig. Gen. Aloisio Emor, who signed the inauguration certificate and list of expendable and non-expendable equipment.

Mines kill one and injure two

The UN Mine Action Office (UNMAO) reported the discovery of an anti-personnel mine by farmers at a location four kilometers from the road between the towns of Yei and Maridi. The mine exploded but caused no injuries.

Norwegian Peoples Aid (NPA) was asked to investigate the site of the incident.

On 23 February, a light truck detonated an anti-tank mine in an area near the military barracks in the Central Equatoria town of Lainya, which is known for its mine-related hazards. The driver was instantly killed and one of his two passengers injured. NPA plans to clear this minefield within the next three months. Mine Risk Education teams will be

sent to the Lainya town area to raise awareness among residents about the dangers of minefields in their vicinity.

On 27 February, a man stepped on a mine approximately three kilometres north of the village of Warka. The man suffered extensive injuries to his lower left leg. He was rescued from the minefield and immediately evacuated to Juba by an ambulance belonging to the mine action group of the The Development Initiative.

Victims Assistance Workshop held in Juba

The third Victims Assistance (VA) National Workshop took place in Juba on 4 and 5 February.

The workshop was attended by over 50 participants, including Sudanese authorities, international and national NGOs, mine victims, people with disabilities, the International Committee of the Red Cross and other organizations and institutions from the southern and northern areas of the country.

The two-day workshop was officially opened by the GoSS Minister for Gender, Social Welfare and Religious Affairs. The authorities and organizations presented their activities and plans, and participants discussed and revised the VA National Work Plan. The transfer of the VA programme to national authorities was also addressed.

It was also announced that Victims Assistance courses would take place with the coordination of Cranfield University in Nairobi during the week beginning 9 March.

Capacity building for Southern Sudanese deminers

The UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) signed an agreement to fund two mine risk education and explosive ordnance disposal teams in Southern Sudan and support staff training activities of the Southern Sudan Demining Authority (SSDA) and the Sudan Integrated Mine Action Services. In addition, the UK

Department for International Development has approved a \$100,000 funding proposal to provide a 100 kilovolt-amperes generator for the National Mine Action Centre's (NMAC) new office building and supply communication equipment to SSDA field offices.

With support from UNMAO staff members, the UNDP has started to work with NMAC and SSDA on preparation of the Article 7 Transparency Report.

UNDP and UNMAO have also begun to work with NMAC and SSDA on refining their organizations' structures and revising their terms of reference for concerned staff at these agencies.

Western Equatoria State mobilized to pray for peace

On 18 February, people of various religious faiths in Western Equatoria gathered to pray for peace in the Southern Sudanese state. On that same day, State Governor Jemma Nunu Kumba told a visiting delegation of senior UNMIS officials and military personnel that the ecumenical prayer service was a civil society initiative designed to strengthen solidarity among residents of the state amid a deepening humanitarian crisis and widespread insecurity caused by the LRA. The governor reaffirmed her government's efforts to improve security and mobilize resources within its means to help adversely affected residents of Western Equatoria. UN and other international agencies operating in the state also attended the prayers.

Meanwhile, reports received on 18 February spoke of two LRA-related incidents, one along the Yambio-Ibba-Maridi road and another near the village of Mboroko roughly 35 kilometers south of Maridi. Two civilians were killed in the attacks and another two were injured. Western Equatoria State Deputy Governor Joseph Ngere confirmed the accounts and commended the efforts of the SPLA and self-defense units of local youths who repelled the LRA attacks and killed three rebels.

UN team visits Lafon County

From 15 to 18 February, a joint UN Team comprising the Bangladeshi Battalion, UN Military Observers, UN Police, Public Information Office, Civil Affairs, and UNDP visited Lafon County to the north of Torit in Eastern Equatoria State.

The purpose of the trip was to investigate a number of outstanding issues, including the aftermath of a reported ambush on the county commissioner's convoy in December 2008 by unidentified gunmen. The county has also suffered serious political and administrative divisions due to disagreements between Lopit and Pari tribesmen over the name of the county and location of its seat.

The main security problem in Lafon County arises from chronic cattle raiding allegedly committed by Buya and Toposa tribesmen. Child abductions are also reported to take place frequently.

Juba Kuku IDP camp demolished

The UNMIS Recovery, Return and Reintegration (RRR) unit and partner organizations have sought to draw attention to the effects of ongoing demolition activity in Juba. One of the city's main settlements for internally displaced persons (IDPs), the Kuku Camp, was recently leveled, leaving approximately 1,000 people homeless.

After the demolition, the Central Equatoria State government officially asked the UN for assistance in the transfer of these IDPs to their home villages. Since this may entail forcible relocation, the request is being carefully studied by UN agencies.

RRR conducts workshop on 2009 work plan

On 23 and 24 February, RRR personnel assigned to Western, Central and Eastern Equatoria States participated in a joint workshop to review the RRR work plan for Sector I. The new RRR director in Khartoum attended the workshop as did the RRR chief for southern Sudan. The aim of the workshop was to refine the 2009 work plan for Sector I

and review and update the forthcoming Accelerated Return and Reintegration Initiative Program.

Sector II – Wau**GoSS ministers hold briefing on public service reforms**

UNMIS Civil Affairs attended a briefing session at Wau's University of Bahr el Ghazal on implementation of the framework for public service reforms that featured two GoSS Ministers on 24 February.

Luka Tombekana Monoja and Awut Deng Acuil, GoSS Ministers for Cabinet Affairs and Labour, Public Service and Human Resource Development, respectively, delivered presentations that included warnings about how poor leadership, ineffective policy and legal frameworks and a lack of accountability can undermine the implementation of public service reforms.

The ministers noted that such reform efforts should seek to curb widespread malfeasance that, among other things, leads to the loss of three million Sudanese pounds in monthly salary payments to "ghost workers" who perform no actual services for government agencies.

Finance Ministry submits taxation act to cabinet

On 23 February, the State Ministry of Finance submitted a new taxation bill entitled "State Development Tax and Services Fees Act 2008" to the state cabinet. The bill will be later presented to the Western Bahr el Ghazal Legislative Assembly and, if approved, would replace the existing 2002 Taxation Act.

Warrap State Reconciliation Committee to mediate between Lau and Apuk

On 28 February, the Warrap State Coordination Office Director informed UNMIS Civil Affairs that a reconciliation committee led by the Warrap State deputy governor and former state governor Luis Anei had been created to mediate between Lau Ariik and Apuk Padoch communities in Tonj North County.

The formation of the body occurred after GoSS President Salva Kiir's four-day visit to Warrap in mid-February helped bring the two sections together. Three sub-committees on Security, Peace and Elders were asked to visit Warrap Town immediately and help promote an environment conducive to reconciliation efforts involving the two communities.

Meanwhile, the Warrap State Coordination Office Director advised Civil Affairs that GoSS President Kiir had ordered former governor Anthony Bol Madut to leave the state immediately after Lau leaders accused Bol of helping to instigate the recent violence.

Governor says Misseriya not a security threat

On 27 February, the Northern Bahr el Ghazal State Governor advised UNMIS Civil Affairs that the state government was not aware of reports that armed Misseriya nomads had crossed the River Kiir.

The accounts of Misseriya movement had come from SPLA zonal commanders in Aweil East County in recent days. But the state governor asserted that the Misseriya should not be considered a threat to the general security climate. He said that state government officials had established close contacts and forged a better understanding with Misseriya traditional leaders, including the Amir of the Misseriya in Meiram. The governor added that the state had compensated the Misseriya with 225 cows to replace cattle allegedly stolen by Dinka tribesmen last year.

Salva Kiir visits Tonj North County

In a meeting with UNMIS Civil Affairs on 19 February, the Southern Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (SSRRC) deputy director in Warrap State stated that the two Dinka communities of Lau Ariik and Apuk Padoch of Tonj North County had not yet reconciled. GoSS President Salva Kiir delayed his visit to Akon at the request of the Warrap state governor to lend more weight to renewed efforts to resolve the dispute.

The GoSS President spent 18 and 19 February in Kuajok and initiated talks with chiefs from both communities. Mr. Kiir's intervention is expected to ease tensions that have been rising since October of last year. The President returned to Kuajok from Akon on 20 February to attend the final session of peace talks. Civil Affairs will follow up on the outcome of the meetings and report back.

Salva Kiir opens Wau electricity plant

The Wau Electricity Generating Plant was officially opened by GoSS President Salva Kiir, accompanied by an Egyptian delegation, on 17 February. Along with schools and a hospital, the generating plant is part of the Egyptian Government's contribution to the economic development of Southern Sudan. The delegation also traveled to Akon and Gogrial West County in Warrap State to lay the foundation for an Egyptian-funded hospital.

Gemeiza Conference moved to Juba

The Gemeiza Conference on cross-border issues affecting Lakes, Jonglei, Central and Eastern Equatoria States during the dry season was moved to Juba. The state governors, concerned border chiefs and commissioners will attend the conference, scheduled to start on 27 February. UNMIS Civil Affairs in Lakes States met with the peace commission to arrange the Lakes State delegation's move to Juba.

AWEPA conducts workshop for Western Bahr el Ghazal legislators

The Association of European Parliamentarians for Africa (AWEPA) organized a three-day workshop on "parliamentary practice and procedures of the assembly" for all the members of the Western Bahr el Ghazal Legislative Assembly in Wau.

Aimed at boosting the capacity of the state's legislators, the workshop covered a wide variety of subjects ranging from parliamentary privileges and immunities to the operation of party systems and the roles of committee chairpersons and state assemblies.

AWEPA Director Rosetta Ikoto announced that similar workshops were being planned for the nine other state legislative assemblies in Southern Sudan, in addition to ones specifically planned for female members of parliament.

The deputy speaker of the Western Bahr el Ghazal Legislative Assembly thanked AWEPA and commented that the members "who did not know what to do and go about issues in the assembly" had now learnt a great deal from the workshop.

UNMIS assesses security in Aweil East County

On 5 February, UNMIS Civil Affairs visited the town of Warawar in Aweil East County to assess the general security situation and ascertain the movement of Misseryia pastoralists into the county.

In the town of Wanyjok, County Commissioner Diing Aher Ngong advised Civil Affairs that he had updated information about the movement of Misseryia nomads across the River Kiir and into Aweil East County for grazing. He added that he was closely monitoring the situation and would share new information as it became available.

In Warawar, Civil Affairs met with the local taxation officer who confirmed that some Misseryia pastoralists had crossed the River Kiir in the vicinity of Warpouk, north of Majok. He also stated that there was a much larger group of Misseryia at the River Kiir, who were reluctant to leave their weapons and had not yet crossed.

The officer further noted that SPLA checkpoints established last year along the road between Majok and Warawar had been removed in May of last year, and the road to Rumaker was now accessible through Omdruman.

Civil Affairs is planning to conduct a follow-up visit to Majok Yieth Thieu, 100 kilometres north of Aweil town, to collect more information about migration in the area.

Grenade explosion kills Rumbek boy

Unexploded ordnance (UXO) continues to be a source of great danger to the lives of civilians in Lakes State, especially to children who mistake them for toys.

On 3 February, a grenade exploded and critically injured a 12-year-old boy who was playing with the device in the city of Rumbek, near the Corrections Office. The boy was admitted to Rumbek hospital, where he later died. Three other civilians standing near the boy also sustained injuries.

The UNMIS Protection of Civilians (PoC) unit has raised the issue of UXOs in Sector II at meetings with UNMAO on several occasions. The PoC Regional Office may wish to follow up with appropriate agencies in Juba to expedite mine clearance activities in Sector II.

UNMIS investigates claims of northerner evictions in Malualkon

On 4 February, UNMIS PoC visited Malualkon in Aweil East County. The visit was organized to investigate claims that individuals of northern background had been forced to leave the town on 9 January.

PoC spoke to an employee of an international NGO, who confirmed that on 9 January four armed SPLA soldiers took him to the military police station and told him that he had to leave Malualkon and move to Wanjok. According to this individual, other civilians of northern origin were also present at the military police station and had been ordered to leave Malualkon, too. The witness was never expelled, however.

PoC could not verify the account with the Aweil East County commissioner. But the county's executive director dismissed the allegations as pure fantasy. On 5 January, PoC visited Wunjok barracks, but the military police refused to provide any information regarding the allegations.

Sector III – Malakal

Conflict resolved in Malakal

The security situation in Malakal deteriorated sharply amid clashes and shooting incidents between Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) joint integrated units (JIUs) and SPLA troops during the last week of February.

Casualties of the violence included SAF, JIU and SPLA soldiers as well as civilians caught up in the conflict. A UN national staff member was wounded in initial shooting that erupted on the morning of February 24.

The Deputy Designated Official (DDO) for Southern Sudan and UN Security reviewed the situation on the ground and stepped up security measures. A decision was taken to maintain the security status at level 3. Staff members from UN agencies and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) were relocated from areas in Malakal town to the UNMIS compound as a precautionary measure.

Over 140 UN agency staff members were pulled out of Malakal as was an unspecified number of INGO employees. The situation was brought under control by efforts of the Cease-fire Joint Military Committee, the Area Joint Military Committee, the DDO and State Security Committee. UNMIS military has been patrolling the buffer zone between SAF and SPLA JIUs in Malakal.

The situation remains largely under control, although incidents of looting of UN agency warehouses by some soldiers and the civilian population were reported.

Peace Conference held in Ulang County

The long-awaited peace conference bringing together five neighbouring counties of Jonglei and Upper Nile States took place from 5 to 8 February in Ulang County, Upper Nile State. The Conference, led by GoSS Vice-President Riek Machar was attended by 700 participants, including GoSS and state officials, commissioners from the concerned

counties of Akobo, Nyirol in Jonglei State, and Ulang, Nasser and Baliet in Upper Nile State. Other participants included chiefs, women, youth and religious groups.

The Conference's main objective was to address seasonal migration/cattle rustling related conflicts, which yearly reach their peak between February and May. Other issues discussed included disarmament, security along the Sobat River corridor to allow safe passage of goods and trade, freedom of movement and settlement, sharing of grazing and water points, prosecution of cattle rustlers, and dispute management mechanisms.

In another development, UNMIS Malakal learned that on 30 January, the Murle tribe of Jonglei State had unleashed an attack on the Lou Nuer of Akobo, Jonglei State, which had left 29 people dead and 15 injured. An unspecified number of cattle were also stolen during the attack. The affected villages are Kaileuiny, Peiri, Yai, Tiem, Paiay, Pamay and Tangnyag.

Shilluk King holds press conference after Nagdiar fighting

On 4 February, UNMIS Human Rights, Civil Affairs, Radio Miraya and DDR attended a press conference organized by the King of Shilluks, Kong Fadit, at his Malakal residence, following fighting that broke out in Nagdiar village.

The main aim of the conference was to refute allegations published by the Sudanese newspaper *Al-Intibaha*. The paper suggested that the King had visited the Chairman of the National Assembly to look for an armed solution in reaction to the Nagdiar incidents.

Kong Fadit explained that the attackers were armed with shotguns, not spears, and he accused Dinka army officers of provoking their tribesmen to occupy Shilluk areas. However, he emphasized that he did not want to jump to any conclusions, as the attackers were now in hands of police.

The King also called on all Southern Sudanese people to live in harmony and peace for the benefit of Sudan. He urged both the GoSS and Government of National Unity to intercede in resolving current disputes over land, which have been a key challenge in maintaining southern stability.

UNMIS takes custody of lost girl

During inspection of the police detention facility in Medina Police Station on 2 February, UNMIS Human Rights accompanied by the State Legal Administration, found an eight-year-old girl, who had been in police detention with adults since 30 January.

The duty officer in Medina Police Station informed UNMIS Human Rights that the child, who is from the Lou Nuer clan, arrived in Malakal on a boat coming from Melut. The child herself confirmed that she came from Melut, where her parents live.

When the child arrived at Malakal River Port, she was totally lost, unable to recognize any landmarks in the town. The police sent broadcasts over Radio Malakal for three consecutive days, but no one appeared to take her home.

Noting that the child was without a sponsor as well as malnourished and sick, UNMIS Human Rights and the State Legal Administration agreed to place the child in the care of UNMIS Human Rights until the police managed to locate her parents.

UNMIS Human Rights also contacted the mission's Child Protection unit to discuss the possibility of returning the child to her parents via an UNMIS flight, in the event the police confirmed their residence in Melut. The young girl is currently receiving malaria treatment under the care of UNMIS Human Rights in Malakal.

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