



UNMIS

Press Conference

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Near-verbatim transcript of the Press Conference
by UN Deputy Resident Humanitarian Coordinator for Southern Sudan,
Lise Grande
UNMIS HQ, Khartoum

UNMIS Spokesperson Ashraf Eissa: Welcome to the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS). We are privileged to have with us today Ms. Lise Grande, the Deputy Resident Humanitarian Coordinator in Southern Sudan. Lise is also in charge of the UNMIS office in the south as well. So she is wearing two very important, hefty hats, as we say. Lise has had a distinguished career in humanitarian work and part of that is a long-standing relationship with Sudan. Lise, between 1996 and 1999, occupied the position of Head of Operations in Operations Lifeline Sudan. During that period, among so many tasks she carried out, she dealt with the famine of 1998. Her duties then took her to Angola, the Congo, Tajikistan, East Timor and Palestine. All these postings were of a humanitarian mandate. Of particular interest is her achievement in the Congo where she immensely helped with large amounts of funding for humanitarian relief in the Congo. We gained Lise in Sudan last September when she assumed her humanitarian responsibility in the south. Without further ado, I hand over to Lise to brief us specifically today about the humanitarian situation in southern Sudan. Thank you, Lise.

DRC/HC for Southern Sudan, Lise Grande: Thank you very much, Ashraf, for that hopefully undeserved introduction. I am glad to be here today and very pleased that so many of you have been able to join us. As Ashraf says, what I would like to do here today is to share with you some brief comments and observations about the humanitarian situation in southern Sudan.

The way that we have taken to characterizing what's happening in the south is to call it a "humanitarian perfect storm". What we mean by this is that we are seeing a convergence of factors in the south that are putting at least 40 percent of the entire population of southern Sudan at real risk. We have a humanitarian perfect storm because of a convergence of factors. There are three main factors leading to this situation: 1) spiralling inter-tribal conflict, 2) a massive food gap and 3) the budget crisis. Those three things put together are creating the humanitarian perfect storm.

Factor One: Spiraling Inter-tribal Violence: Since January of this year, more than 2,000 people have died in inter-tribal violence and more than 250,000 people have been displaced across the ten states of Southern Sudan. Many of us are aware that since March there have been four brutal massacres involving hundreds of victims, most of whom have been women and children: in March more than 450 people were killed in Pibor County in Jonglei; in April, more than 250 people were killed in Akobo County; at least 70 people were killed in Torketch in Upper Nile and just last week, more than 180 people were killed in Mareng outside of Akobo in Jonglei. In June, a further 100 people, mostly Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army (SPLA), were killed along the Sobat Corridor outside Nassir in Upper Nile and 735 MT of WFP food which was moving down the Sobat Corridor to Akobo to relieve the stress there was lost.

What is most worrying is that one attack leads to another, resulting in a spiral of attack and counter-attack. The fact that these attacks are targeting civilians, mostly women and children, is a very disturbing trend.

In Western Equatoria, which borders the DRC, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) continues to wreck havoc. Since late July, 181 people have been killed in LRA attacks and the numbers of refugees and displaced are rising steadily. Altogether since late 2008, over 230,000 have been internally displaced as a result of the LRA more than 25,000 people have entered Southern Sudan as refugees. The UN has mounted a major humanitarian operation involving 6 UN agencies and a large number of NGOs, targeting more than 190,000

people in Western and Central Equatoria. In terms of the future, however, the picture does not look very good - violence is continuing in the DRC and CAR, raising the concern of future displacements and increased numbers of refugees.

Factor Two: Food Deficits: The Southern Sudan is faced with a massive food deficit caused by a combination of late rains, high levels of insecurity and displacement, disruptions of trade and high food prices. WFP originally estimated that 1.2 million people in the south would need 96,000 MTs of food aid during 2009. In June, when it became clear that the rains were late, we started to see very worrying conditions in five states—Northern Bahr el-Ghazal, Warrap, Upper Nile, Jonglei and Eastern Equatoria. Most worrying was data which showed that in hard-hit areas like Aweil, severe acute malnutrition rates were twice the emergency threshold. It was because of this that the GoSS decided to reassess the food security situation. This process is now almost done. Although the results are still being analysed and will be announced at meeting the GoSS is convening this next Saturday some things are already clear.

The rains necessary for the first harvest have failed—which will extend the hunger gap from June all the way through October, when it normally ends in August. Although it is still too early to tell for sure the rains for the second and main harvest are likely to moderate, if not below average. Of the 96,000 MTs that WFP appealed for for 2009, it has already received 80,000 MTs. It anticipates that it will need 22,000 MT of additional food to respond the food gap. Half of this will be for Jonglei State alone, one of the states hardest-hit by insecurity.

Factor Three: Budget Crisis: Probably no other Government in the region has suffered as much from the global melt-down as Southern Sudan which has lost a staggering 40 percent of the revenues it expected. As a result the GoSS has not been able to take over the responsibility from NGOs and UN agencies for large parts of the social safety net as intended – putting the agencies under enormous pressure, particularly since many of them had planned to hand-over this work and therefore do not have sufficient funding to continue. This has put the whole safety net, carefully built up since the signing of the CPA, in jeopardy.

The Ministry of Health, for example, had intended to put 7,000 NGO health workers on the national budget. Then the global financial crisis hit and the price of oil plummeted leaving the GoSS with a massive budget gap. The Diocese of Torit, for example, the sole provider of health services in large parts of Eastern Equatoria State, was supposed to hand-over its services to the state Ministry of Health, which didn't have the funds to take this on. The Diocese was facing a close down its operations, but was saved last-minute by a small contribution from the Common Humanitarian Fund allowing them to continue to operate until the end of the year.

Scope: We're dealing with an overwhelming situation in humanitarian terms. Let me just try to put this in perspective: there are currently 27 major operations underway in eight states affecting 190,000 people. We had originally assumed that there might be ten for the whole of the year. Most states have one or two NGOs helping the government manage tens of thousands of IDPs.

As you can imagine, we are facing a number of problems in trying to manage an operation of this size: 1) we don't have the money—originally, partners in Southern Sudan requested USD 412 million in the 2009 Work Plan of which USD 59 million has been received thus far. (These figures do not include the requirements for WFP food assistance, which are calculated as one emergency project for the whole of Sudan.) In June, we went through an exercise of "drastic prioritization" and re-calculated our minimum requirements until the end of the year. We need USD 115 million. We went even further, however, knowing the global reduction in aid and calculated that the absolutely essential bare-bones needed simply to keep people alive in Southern Sudan is USD 85 million.

A word on capacity. There are many constraints in Southern Sudan but two of the most difficult are access and capacity. Let me start with access. At present there is probably less than 200 kilometres of paved road in all of Southern Sudan. At the best of times, we have access to only 40 percent of the areas we need to get to. During the rainy season, we lose even this. This remains the case for months. The people in these areas are absolutely cut-off. In terms of capacity, the point is that there isn't enough. The GoSS doesn't have enough—the UN agencies don't and neither do the NGOs. For instance, we need an estimated 10 NGOs per state to support the humanitarian operation yet there are on average only two per state working in the most remote areas.

Marginalisation: We need to understand that this situation comes on top of years of marginalization that has put Southern Sudan at the bottom of development indexes. The statistics are absolutely scary. Let me share just a few:

- More than 90% of the population lives on less than a dollar a day;
- 1.2 million people in Southern Sudan are food deficit and will need assistance during this year;
- One out of seven women who become pregnant will probably die of pregnancy related complications;
- There are only 10 certified midwives in all of Southern Sudan;
- 92% of women in Southern Sudan cannot read and write;
- Only 27% of girls are in school and there are 1,000 primary school pupils per teacher;
- 97% of the population has no access to sanitation;
- Polio, once eradicated from Southern Sudan has re-emerged;
- Some of the deadliest epidemics in the world are prevalent in Southern Sudan, including Cholera, Meningitis, Rift Valley Fever, Ebola, Haemorrhagic Fever and Guinea Worm; Polio has re-emerged.
- And perhaps the two statistics that capture it all: a 15 year old girl has a higher chance of dying in childbirth than of finishing school;
- The maternal mortality rate is the highest in the world and the child immunization rate the lowest.

In fact, I think the best way to look at this is to see the current humanitarian perfect storm as coming on top of a profound structural crisis that will take years for the South to overcome.

I know I have given you a lot of bad news, so let me try and give you some good news:

- Since January the UN Agencies and NGOs have been providing supplementary and therapeutic feeding to 45,000 children, which is about 50% of our target for 2009.
- Nearly 50% of children below the age of five have been vaccinated against measles, Vitamin A and distributed to thousands of households Long-lasting Insect Treated Nets (LLITN).
- There are now 10,000 water points throughout Southern Sudan, giving clean drinking water to thousands of needy people. This year alone, we have managed to set up 300 such water points.
- The Government is doing what it can. The Ministries of Education and Health and Water and providing what services they can despite the budget gap. The Southern Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (SSRRC) is helping IDPs and responding to emergencies. SSRRC has offices in all ten states, and is the main interlocutor for international partners in responding to the humanitarian crisis.

What I'd like to do now is summarise my key messages: first, things are really tough in the South. Four years after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), Southern Sudan is facing an almost unmanageable set of problems. Second, a lot of good work is being done, third, despite this, we just can't keep up. The GoSS is making Herculean efforts, the NGOs are doing fantastic work, the UN agencies are operating around the clock, but all of us are stretched to the limit—we don't have enough money, we don't have enough staff and because of these constraints we are not moving out of the emergency fast enough. I know that there is a lot of attention to Darfur and this is deserved but the South deserves much more than it is receiving, particularly when the CPA itself is entering its critical stage.

UNMIS Spokesperson Ashraf Eissa: Thank you very much, Lise, for this candid, insightful and well-documented briefing on the state of humanitarian affairs in the south. In another degree since I may deviate from the norm and use the benefit of the chair and ask the first question, I understand that recently you headed a team that went to an area of conflict in Akobo. Would you be able to give us a brief overview of the action that yourself and partners in this joint team put in place for dealing with these situations?

DRC/HC for Southern Sudan, Lise Grande: Thank you for that, Ashraf. I think colleagues here are aware that a week ago on Sunday in the area of Mareng – which is an area about 40 kilometers south-west of Akobo in Jonglei State – there was an inter-tribal attack and more than 185 people were killed. These were Lou-Nuer who were killed. These were people who had been staying in Akobo. They had been displaced earlier in a massacre that had happened in April. The survivors fled into Akobo where we as UN agencies, NGOs and the government were trying to provide life-saving assistance.

And here is the problem. As I mentioned it earlier, in June barges carrying WFP food down the Sobat River and heading to Akobo – that food was headed for Akobo. The problem is that it sunk. Akobo is one of those remote areas in southern Sudan. The only way we could get there at this time of year was along that river. The river was no longer accessible ... there was too much insecurity. So what happened is that the WFP started to try and fly in food to Akobo through an air bridge. UNMIS took some of its assets and also supported WFP to fly in too. But there just wasn't the payload capacity to get enough food into Akobo. The populations were under severe food stress and it was those people, searching for food, that fled Akobo and went to Mareng. When they got to Mareng, they set up a temporary fishing village along the Geni River. What they were doing is they were fishing. They were fishing because they couldn't survive in Akobo; they needed food. They were attacked and, as I said, 180 of them were killed. Our response from the UN was, right away as Ashraf said, a joint team led by the government and supported by the UN agencies and UNMIS (both military and civilian) went in. They got to the massacre site just days after the incident occurred and they also went into Akobo where the survivors were.

The UN, as a result of that assessment, came up with a three-track strategy: track #1: get more food into Akobo to relieve the food stress; track #2: help the authorities to deal with the crisis by the support we give to them. Remember we have recurrent attack and counter-attack; track #3 was to look at how UNMIS military could be deployed in a way which would help the authorities in their primary responsibility to protect civilians. As Ashraf also mentioned, just a few days ago senior ministers from the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) led by its Minister of Interior and other leading political figures went back to the massacre site and also to Akobo, talking with the populations. This is the mission on which I was. Talking with the populations, the GoSS ministers were stressing how important it was not to retaliate; to stop the spiral.

One of the things that UNMIS has done as part of its mandate to help the authorities in the protection of civilians is that just this morning we are helping to transport an additional company of SPLA troops who have been moved from Juba into Lokongole, a location near Pibor, where we expect a reprisal may occur. There is evidence that some kind of reprisal attack is being planned and SPLA has moved very quickly to try and preempt this, and UNMIS is providing the necessary air support for that.

Xinhua: It is clear that tribal violence is the major cause of what you described as the humanitarian storm in southern Sudan. On whom does the responsibility to prevent such violence fall? Is the UN's role confined only to monitoring or would it think now about invoking its civilian protection mandate?

You also mentioned that 1.2 million people in southern Sudan urgently need food and that they face a food gap that could stretch until October. You however use a combination of terms to describe their plight – food gap, humanitarian storm. Wouldn't the term, "famine in southern Sudan" be more appropriate?

Lise Grande: Thank you for the question. The mandate for UNMIS is of course set by the UN Security Council. If it required the members of the Security Council (*indiscernible*) that would be the responsibility of those Member States. In terms of the work that UNMIS does in protection of civilians, as I mentioned earlier, the key point to remember here is that primary responsibility for the protection of civilians rests with the government. What we do is to try, within our enormous constraints, to support them in that role. In the case of the aftermath of the Mareng massacre, several very important steps have been taken by UNMIS military in order to help the authorities. One of the steps that has been taken, in addition to the transporting of the 200 SPLA soldiers that I referred to earlier, UNMIS has been doing a series of low-flying helicopter (*indiscernible*). This is where you go into the areas where (*indiscernible*) occurred and you fly very low as a deterrent measure. In addition to that, UNMIS is also going to be deploying long-range foot patrols. This is where you have teams that go out, again into remote areas, places where reprisals are likely. Teams go out for between three and ten days. They are on the ground; they are inside of the communities. In the case of UNMIS, we are going to do this jointly with civilian and military. The civilians will be there to work with the communities at reconciliation and dialogue and the military will be there for deterrent effects. So you could see that what UNMIS is doing is a range of responses to help the government in its primary responsibility. But, again, an adjustment of the mandate is something which the Security Council itself would be looking at.

Regarding the description of the situation, the reason we call it a humanitarian perfect storm is because we thought that that kind of captures what we are looking at – these three major influences since the beginning of the year: the spiraling of the tribal violence, the food deficit and the budget gap. Wrap all that together and ... it is a heck of a situation.

In terms of whether or not we call what is going on a famine, as I said, the Vice President of the Government of Southern Sudan is going to be convening a donors' conference on Saturday, just a few days ahead. The full results of the assessment are going to be presented there.

BBC-Arabic: There are also reports of the clashes in Tonj, in Warrap lately where at least 30 people were killed. What are the real causes behind the recurrence of these tribal clashes in southern Sudan? What have you in the UN done to help change the mindset of the people involved in such clashes into a more civil orientation?

Lise Grande: Thank you for this very interesting question. Right before this press conference, I was made aware of the situation in Tonj. If I may, I think that if you follow the situation in the south, you would see that unfortunately on an almost weekly basis, you see incidents where a large number of civilians are dying in these kinds of inter-tribal conflicts. I pointed out in my comments the larger massacres but, again, as you pointed out, 30 were dead in Tonj, week before there were problems in Lakes, there were then problems in Warrap. If you look at the statistics, it is something that is affecting large parts of the south. Now the reasons for them, I think are very complex ... I mean a lot of reasons for this happening. I think that government authorities, members of civil societies, political parties, those of us that are working as international partners, everyone is trying to get a grip on this to understand what the factors are leading to this and the steps we could take to try and help the authorities deal with it.

I cannot pretend to know all the reasons why. The fact is that it is a mess, it is a very serious situation and that the authorities are doing what they can to resolve it.

Now how does the UN cope? I would be drawing you back to our comments on Mareng. As you can see the UN, through its mission UNMIS, is providing some support through its military to try to help authorities get a grip. But there is a lot of work that the civilian parts of UNMIS also do. All kinds of work is done on a routine, regular basis: helping communities to reconcile, bringing together, for example, county commissioners from counties that are fighting each other, supporting the Southern Sudan's Legislative Assembly's Peace Commission, supporting the ceasefire committees that are often immediately established by elders and leaders between the tribes after a massacre, supporting women's groups who are trying to facilitate reconciliation and dialogue.

In addition to that, the UN agencies are in it providing all kinds of emergency assistance. Recovery work is ongoing in southern Sudan as is the business of developing state structures. We are in there supporting the GoSS as it tries to put the structures together. There is a full range of activities that have been taken but, again, the responsibility for dealing with the crisis rests with the authorities and what the UN tries to do is to facilitate and help their work.

Al-Akhbar: If I remember correctly, the WFP had announced some two years previous that it would help develop a road network in southern Sudan that would also link Khartoum with Nimule by end 2009. The Governor of Jonglei State said recently that the lack of accessible roads in areas like Akobo is among the reasons for insecurity in the region and the failure to send in timely military reinforcements and relief assistance to those areas. How far have these projects gone? You did not mention in your brief the development and rehabilitation projects in the pipeline. After four years of UNMIS' presence here, have we gone back to providing emergency support?

Lise Grande: On the question of roads, in my comments I was referring to tarmac roads. In fact, though, if you look at southern Sudan, one of the great achievements of the Transitional Period has been the opening of large parts of the south through improved, not tarmac, roads, the WFP has done an amazing job of opening more than 2,000 kilometers of these roads. They do so under a project that is supported through the Ministry of Roads and Transport. Tarmacking the roads in the south is something that is going to cost absolutely billions of dollars. At the moment, that money isn't available for the south. So, yes, there is access and a tremendous amount has been done. In fact of the about 6,000 kms of road that have been opened since the signing of the CPA, WFP alone has done more than 2,000. These are improvements but they are not tarmac roads. And even with that size in achievement, you still have only 40% of the south accessible by road – 60% isn't. And because these are not tarmac roads, the roads become inaccessible during the rainy season. The question of tarmacking the roads is critical for the long-term accessibility of the south.

In terms of the recovery and development work that is going on, in my last intervention, I just briefly said that yes there is a lot of recovery work that is going on and there is a lot of development work. This particular briefing is on the humanitarian situation, we have been focusing on that, but I would be pleased on another

occasion to share with you the full stock of activity that the UN is doing under the leadership of the GoSS in the areas of recovery and development. Don't get me wrong, the south is not just about emergencies - we have absolutely no intention to reduce our activities to that. We are working on all fronts simultaneously. But I think the point that we want to make is that anyone who thinks that the emergency was over in the south would have to adjust their expectations because it is not. There is a humanitarian perfect storm there right now that deserves our attention and that is the reason why we need to get more money, more capacity and more access.

AFP: First, I just want to make sure about characterization: one or two months ago, some UN officials said that southern Sudan was "on the verge of a food crisis". Now, are in the middle of a food crisis rather than on the verge?

Why are NGOs not going to southern Sudan?

You said in your brief that at the beginning of the year you needed \$412 million for southern Sudan but your (*indiscrible*) so would you now need more than that amount?

Lise Grande: I think that the point we wanted to make about how to deal with the food crisis is that a couple of months ago it became very clear that the rains were failing and we started data that was coming in from place like Aweil which indicated that the consequences of that were pretty high. In Aweil, severe acute malnutrition rates were twice the emergency threshold. This is a clear indication that there is real trouble. This is why the GoSS, supported by WFP, UNICEF and our partners on the ground, moved to have this assessment. Let me just backtrack by saying that once a year there is what is called the Annual Needs and Livelihoods Assessment. It is normally done in October and this is where we come up with a projection for how much food is likely to be required for the year. What we do, beginning in June, is we reassess them, we reopen them in the five states that we were particularly worried about. Those five states are Northern Bahr-el-Ghazal, Warrap, Upper Nile, Jonglei and Eastern Equatoria. Literarily, as we speak, the results are being analyzed and studied and it would be those results that would be presented at the donor meeting that is going to be held on Saturday. As I said several times, Kenro who is the head of the WFP and is with us today sitting over there, is going to be next week addressing this group and will be going much more into depth about (*indiscernible*) and the steps that are going to be taken. What we can clearly say is, we have got a problem. We know that the hunger gap is going to extend all the way through mid-October; the first harvest has failed; the rains haven't come ... so we have got a problem. The scope of that problem is still being looked at. We are trying to fine-tune that. Obviously, we are very careful. We don't want to go out there with figures that we haven't cross-checked and triangulated. That is what is happening now. More precision on that is coming.

In terms of why NGOs are not going in the south, there are a lot NGOs in the south but if you look at the enormity of what we are trying to accomplish, they are not enough – and, boy, we want a lot more. Why aren't they more in the south? Well its really difficult ... you have to bring in all your capacity: there isn't a road system, there isn't an electricity grid, and there is nothing in a lot of these places. It is a very difficult environment, operating costs are enormous – we have some of the highest indirect-to-direct costs in the entire region. (*indiscernible*) you can't piggy-back on anything because there is isn't anything to piggy-back on. So there are a lot of reasons why the working environment is very, very difficult. The point is that obviously more is needed given the scope of what needs to be done.

Now the numbers of what we need. What I was referring to, these \$412 million, is what the agencies working in the south asked for in the Sudan Work Plan – you know that once a year the UN and its partners come up with this big Work Plan. We asked for money for our operations all around Sudan, for Darfur, north and of course the south. The southern part of the 2009 Work Plan was for \$412 million of which we got \$60 million, excluding WFP figures. What we have done is to go in there and really prioritize that, really push ourselves to come up with an analysis that says what is the rock bottom that is needed. That rock bottom was \$115 million. And then we went one step further and said, absolutely what was needed and that is what the \$85 million figure we are referring to came up.

Al-Rai Al-Aam: You said that some southern Sudanese are dying of hunger. What hungry man would go about totting a gun? Is there someone out there who has an interest in bringing in these guns? Are there people out there who have an interest in perpetrating the tribal conflicts in southern Sudan?

Ashraf Eissa: Our briefing today is about humanitarian assistance. Your question could be answered by a different part of UNMIS. Lise is here to talk about the humanitarian situation in southern Sudan so I am afraid I will have to defer this question, thank you.

Al-Ayyam: You said that there is security instability and a food crisis in southern Sudan. Do you think the elections and the referendum would be conducted in southern Sudan?

Lise Grande: Yes. I do think that there would be elections and I do think that there would be a referendum. I think it is clear that there is real commitment to this and people want that to happen.

IGAD/AEC: Do you think that disarmament is a viable option for us to pursue? In a meeting we once had with the GoSS, they told us that whenever they try to disarm the population, human rights and other organizations complain saying that the practice is not being carried out humanely. What do you think can be done in terms of disarmament?

Lise Grande: The GoSS and tribal leaders, chiefs and so forth, have been grappling with this question for quite a while. I think it has been very clear from recent statements that have been made by government officials and others that civilian disarmament is a priority. I think that the process of civilian disarmament will help to reduce tensions and that is certainly the expectation of many of the colleagues that are looking at this question. In some areas, civilian disarmament is already starting and will probably continue and accelerate after the rainy season.

Ashraf Eissa: Thank you, Lise. Again, the question is of humanitarian issues. We would also like to give the opportunity to the journalists who are in this hall. Thank you.

Sudan Vision: You said that there would be a donors' conference next week to seek funds for this emergency situation. We know that these always take time. What I want to ask is that according to our knowledge, there are resources in the Work Plan in the MDTF funds. It is more important to keep these people alive because I don't think they will be alive until the development project is implemented. Can't you ask the donors to shift some of these resources to save these people?

Lise Grande: The funds from the Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) are being used for structural development. In that regard, there have been a series of meetings of the MDTF in the south and this situation is so serious that donors are looking at directing funds into instruments that could be used directly for the emergency – the basic services fund, the humanitarian fund and so forth. Donors have been very sensitive to this and we have seen real flexibility in how they are channeling their funds. It is a very positive development.

Sudan Radio Service: Do you think there could be local solutions to the problems from the civilians apart from waiting for the UN? I guess that people in the GoSS themselves are very busy with campaigning for the elections. Do you think there could be local solutions?

Lise Grande: I think that what you see throughout southern Sudan is that community reconciliation mechanisms are activated constantly. All kinds of activity such as the ceasefire committees, the Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly's Peace Commissions, and all kinds of reconciliation work are being done by the communities themselves. The church is deeply involved in this. This is all very positive. We do have to recognize however that at the moment the scope and the intensity of the problem is outpacing these mechanisms and the work that is being done.

Radio Miraya FM: You mentioned Upper Nile as one of the states affected by the crisis, amongst others in southern Sudan. According to information released last year by Upper Nile State authorities, they said that they had enough food for two or three more years. We also know that Upper Nile State is one of the major agricultural producers in southern Sudan. Could you elaborate more on the food situation in Upper Nile State?

Lise Grande: Upper Nile is one of the five states that the reassessment has occurred in. I don't know the exact scope of the deficit there. The government will be having that meeting next Saturday and I think Kenro can speak to you more next week. But the deficit is significant and we will share with you more precise details when it comes out.

Ashraf Eissa: At the end of our press conference it remains for me to thank our guest for today, Lise Grande, and we look forward to seeing you next week. Thank you.

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