



United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)

Media & Spokesperson Unit
Communications & Public Information Office

MEDIA MONITORING REPORT

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Highlights

Rebels accuse South Sudanese army of violating ceasefire

Sudantribune.com Addis Ababa, 24/01/14 - The rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition (SPLM/A In Opposition) have accused the South Sudanese army of violating the cessation of hostilities agreement, less than 24 hours after its signing.

The two sides agreed in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa on Thursday to stop all the military operations against each other.

The rebels led by the former vice-president said their positions have been attacked in the last few hours in Unity and Upper Nile states by the forces loyal to President Salva Kiir Mayardit.

Machar's spokesperson, James Gatdet Dak, said the pro-Kiir forces of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) have moved out of Bentiu, the state capital of Unity, and attacked the pro-democracy forces in areas of DanDok, about 50kms south of Bentiu town.

"The pro-Kiir forces have just violated the recently signed cessation of hostilities agreement in just less than ten hours after the signing. This clearly indicates the lack of seriousness on the part of the government to respect the agreement," he said; adding that the rebels had the right for self-defence.

Dak further claimed that SPLA forces have also attacked a number of rebels-held areas on Friday in Upper Nile state.

The mediator on Thursday announced that a Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (MVM) will be formed to observe the truce.

IGAD chief mediator, Seyoum Mesfin, said that talks will stop from the 24th January to 7th of February in order to set up the various mechanisms need to implement the signed deals such a joint technical committee and MVM. ([Back to Top](#))

South Sudan rivals vow to respect cessation of hostilities agreement

Sudantribune.com Juba, 23/01/14 - The warring parties in South Sudan have pledged their readiness to respect the cessation of hostilities agreement signed Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on Wednesday raising hopes that the deal could pave the way for the political aspects and root causes of the conflict to be resolved.

"The signing of the cessation of hostilities demonstrates commitment of the government to end this senseless conflict. It is a clear demonstration of commitment of the government to resolving political differences through peaceful dialogue", South Sudan's foreign minister", Barnaba Marial Benjamin told Sudan Tribune on Thursday.

Minister Benjamin, a close ally of President Kiir, expressed the government's readiness to respect the agreement to ensure that peace prevails in the world's youngest nation.

"The signing of the ceasefire is itself a commitment that the government will respect it. There should be doubt on our side", Benjamin said.

The lead negotiator of the South Sudanese government's delegation to the talks in the Ethiopian capital, Nhial Deng Nhial, told Sudan Tribune that it was "not easy" bridging the differences between the two sides.

"We hope the cessation of hostilities will accelerate the process to end the bloodshed in the country. We hope the other side reciprocate and demonstrate the will and listen to voices reason who calling for peace to prevail in the country", Nhial told Sudan Tribune, shortly after the signing of the deal.

Ban Ki-moon, the UN Secretary-General, said on Thursday that he was "very much encouraged" by the "good news" that the peace agreement had been signed after weeks of delays.

Signing the deal was delayed for several weeks over rebel demands that eleven political detainees, all of whom are senior members of the ruling party - the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) - are released.

Yien Mathew Chol, assistant spokesperson for the rebels, described as the SPLM/A in Opposition in cessation of hostilities agreement signed on Thursday, expressed hope that the deal would end the bloodshed, pledging the readiness of the group to respecting the agreement.

"On our side, we will try to do the best within our capacity and power to respect and implement it if the other side show significant commitment", Chol told Sudan Tribune without elaborating.

Under the deal, the rivals among others, agreed to cease all military engagements that may undermine the peace process as well as commit themselves to immediately cease all military operations and freeze their forces in current positions.

The parties further agreed to "refrain from taking any actions that could lead to military confrontations including all movement of forces, ammunition resupply, or any other action that could be viewed as confrontational; ensure that all forces or armed groups under their influence, control or/and command shall observe this Agreement; and disengage forces or armed groups under their control; redeploy and/or progressively withdraw armed groups and allied forces invited by either side from the theater of operation."

The deal also allow eleven senior officials of the governing Sudan People's Liberation detained after fighting broke out on December 15, to be released.

But it remains unclear when they would be released as the agreement did not indicate timelines.

The status of the detainees and the presence of Ugandan troops, who have been fighting alongside the South Sudanese army (SPLA), was one of the contentious issues since during negotiations began in early January.

Lual Bol Kuan, spokesperson for South Sudanese business community said President Kiir had demonstrated commitment to bringing peace and stability in the country.

"I never doubted that this conflict would be resolved because President Salva Kiir had always demonstrated his commitment and desire to keeping the country in peace and united. He has been doing this since ascending to the helm of leadership in 2005", Kuan explained.

When Kiir became the Chairman of the SPLM in 2005 he appointed Riek Machar, who is now leading the rebellion, as his deputy. But since South Sudan's independence in 2011 Machar has become increasingly critical of the government's performance and openly put himself forward to replace Kiir as the party leader and therefore the person most likely to become president in elections due for 2015.

Kiir sacked Machar and his whole cabinet in July last year, a move which culminated in many disgruntled senior members of the party, who at the beginning of December held a press conference to describe Kiir's leadership as "increasingly dictatorial".

When the issues raised by this group were not discussed a high-level meeting on December 15 tensions increased further and that evening fighting broke out in Juba between forces loyal to Kiir and those who backed Machar.

Machar has dismissed claims that the fighting amounted to a coup attempt but consequently assumed leadership of rebellions from the army in Jonglei, Unity and Upper Nile states.

Both sides have been accused of mass human rights violations, by groups such as Human Rights Watch. It is unclear whether Machar will be able to persuade the ethnic militias

aligned to him- most notably the White Army - to cease hostilities and abide by the deal. [\(Back to Top\)](#)

UN humanitarian chief to visit S. Sudan next week

Sudantribune.com Juba, 23/01/14 - The United Nations humanitarian chief, Valerie Amos will visit South Sudan from 27-29 January to draw attention to the humanitarian consequences of its current crisis and mobilize further support for vital aid efforts.

During her three-day visit, Amos is expected to meet with representatives of the government and humanitarian partners discuss ways to scale up relief assistance and improve access to communities in need.

“She will underscore the importance of ensuring the protection of civilians, and of aid workers,” the UN said in a statement.

Amos, also the emergency relief coordinator, is expected in the capital, Juba, Jonglei and Lakes states, where hundreds of thousands of families remain displaced. [\(Back to Top\)](#)

Red Cross calls for respect of health facilities

Sudantribune.com Juba, 23/01/14 - International Committee for the Red Cross officials in Juba on Thursday called for respect of medical and other humanitarian facilities in South Sudan’s conflict affected areas.

In a press briefing at the ICRC office in Juba, Melker Mabeck, the head of the agency delegation in South Sudan, said the challenges are immense.

"South Sudan was already in a difficult situation" before the conflict began in mid-December, Mabeck said.

He refused to give a figure on the number of people who have been killed in the conflict, saying "it is a challenge to reach areas in South Sudan" due to security and mobility constraints.

The International Crisis Group research group estimates that 10,000 people may have died. Members of the South Sudanese parliament who visited Bor, the capital of Jonglei state, said that, based on reports from local leaders, around 2,500 people had died in the area, which has changed hands between rebels and the government four times since the conflict began.

South Sudan’s army (SPLA) is currently in control of the town after they retook it on 18 January. The SPLA has also regained control of Bentiu and Malakal - the state capitals of Unity and Upper Nile states respectively.

However, the rebels are still in control of some of the oil fields in Unity and Upper Nile. Oil production, which the government relies on for most of its income, has fallen from 240,000 barrels per day to around 200,000 bpd.

Over half a million people have been displaced by the fighting, according to the United Nations.

Mabeck said the ICRC is "exploring every possible option for bringing the aid to the people who need it and to care for the injured."

Jacob Kurtzer, a member of the ICRC, said staff have been deployed to help treating the injured from both sides of the conflict. He declined to give figures of the number of injured that are being treated.

Medical facilities have been looted in some of the key conflict zones including Bor and Malakal. Sudan Tribune has seen the bodies of over 30 people who were found shot and killed at Bor hospital during a visit earlier this week. [\(Back to Top\)](#)

MSF donates drugs to Nimule Hospital

Emmanuel Radio Torit, 23/01/14 - Medicine Sans Frontiers or MSF accepted to provide emergency drugs to Nimule Hospital to rescue the facility from scarcity following increased number of patients due to influx of internally displaced persons or IDPs to the area.

MSF South Sudan Emergency Coordinator Jordan David said the agency was ready to deliver drugs after receiving orders from the Hospital, Emmanuel Radio reported.

Mr David admitted that sanitation still remains a challenge due to lack of proper IDPs' settlement.

He said MSF provided clean water to both the IDPs and the host community in order to avoid outbreak of water borne diseases.

The Coordinator said MSF found it difficult to provide infrastructure materials until the IDPs were allocated to a proper place.

He said MSF will give some essential non-food items after assessing the conditions of the IDPs.

Mr David urged the state government to speed up the process of relocating the IDPs to enable them get humanitarian aid. [\(Back to Top\)](#)

JEN donates tools to IDPs

Easter Radio Yei, 23/01/14 - The Japan emergency NGOs or JEN on Thursday donated tools to the internally displaced people or IDPs in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan or UNMISS compound in Yei.

JEN donated hoes, slashes, axes, wheelbarrow and spades to help the IDPs clean their environment to avoid outbreak of diseases in the camp, Easter Radio reported.

Yei River County Relief Rehabilitation Commission Coordinator Arkangelo Sebit urged the IDPs to help themselves and not only wait even for cleaning from NGOs.

Mr Sebit revealed that the IDPs were facing food shortages.

He said it is now over two weeks that the IDPs receive no food assistance.

Mr Sebit appealed to the World Food Program or WFP to quickly supply food to the IDPs.

The Coordinator said the situation was terrible for the IDPs because they stay without food.

Caritas Yei, Relief Rehabilitation Commission, JEN, Across and EPC are among partners supporting the IDPs.

The four NGOs will donate some non food items to the IDPs on Friday. [\(Back to Top\)](#)

Nile Hope provides clean water & sanitation facilities for Tamping IDPs

Radio Miraya Juba, 23/01/14 - Nile Hope, a local NGO, is providing clean water and sanitation facilities for the IDPs in Tamping.

The executive director of the organization, Paul Biel, says their major challenge is the big numbers of the IDPs.

"... the camp is full we don't have enough space to put more toilet that is number one. Number two we don't have enough space to build or to do temporary emergency shower rooms."

"... then the other thing is that the water itself they don't have enough where to run, because you found that here in UNMISS camp there are water run way that was opened but now people are staying there people are occupying it." [\(Back to Top\)](#)

Diarrhea, malaria cases in IDP camps

Gurtong Juba, 23/01/14 - Diarrheal diseases and malaria infection have been reported amongst the internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the Paloich health center, an official has said.

Melut County Commissioner Akuoch Ateng Diing said that there have been reports of diseases among the IDPs from Baliet and Malakal that fled to his county following the outbreak of fighting in the state.

Akuoch said the county is now hosting about 30,000 civilians who were displaced from Baliet County and Malakal Town.

Akuoch told **Gurtong** that the county has ran short of medicines.

The civilians are camp in four areas in the county including; Paloich with two camps, one at Paloich primary school, another at Paloich church and the other camp is in Sudan International Mission Church and others in Paloich Catholic Church.

According to Commissioner Akuoch, the health officials are reporting only Malaria cases and the diarrheal cases in IDPs camps.

He said that they have helped the IDPs with some 500 sacks of grains but said they do not have enough anymore..

He said that the diseases could have been due to the inadequate clean safe drinking water. "The displaced civilians are in large numbers and having access to clean and safe water is a problem" said the commissioner.

He added that some are malnourished due to lack of good feeding and inadequate food. "We only gave them the little we had for some sacks of grains but were not enough," he said adding that there is need to give them some supplement of food to control malnutrition. [\(Back to Top\)](#)

Church condemns massive killing in Bor

Gurtong Juba, 24/01/14 - The church leadership in Jonglei state has strongly condemned what it called massive killing of innocent civilians in Bor.

More than 10 people have been reportedly murdered in one of the churches in Bor allegedly by rebels led by Riek Machar.

Ruben Akurdit de Ngong, the Bishop of Bor diocese said massive destruction committed by rebel factions in Bor is a crime against humanity which cannot be done by God's lovers.

In Saint Cathedral, known as Leudier in Bor, at least 14 elderly women loyal to God have been murdered in cold blood, most of who worked in the church.

Deng Dau Deng, Member of Parliament representing greater Bor community in National assembly said they saw 14 dead bodies lying down in the Episcopal Church of South Sudan (ECS) compound.

Achol Ayom, the deputy chairman of AIDS/HIV Commission said: "I went to the church, the church has 14 dead bodies lying on the ground reported to have been killed by forces of Machar. So who can do that atrocity?"

"I didn't know who to blame if handicaps are being killed in Bor, who on earth has a brain to do that? We need a lot to clear off not in the city alone but in our hearts and later see how this South Sudan will recover," Achol told reporters at Juba airport on Tuesday upon arrival from Bor.

The members of parliament representing greater Bor in South Sudan national government told the media that more than 2,500 people died in Bor alone. [\(Back to Top\)](#)

Bor survivors tell of seeing people being raped, killed

Sudantribune.com Juba, 23/01/14 - As the South Sudanese government and rebels signed a peace deal in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa on Thursday, the people affected by the fighting are still struggling to come to terms with the destruction and violence of the last five weeks.

On a trip to Bor, the capital of Jonglei state, Sudan Tribune spoke to people who had survived the conflict, which saw the key town change hands four times since fighting began on December 15

Ayor Garang, 63, was admitted to Bor hospital for back pain in November 2013 but says he was forced to beg rebel soldiers not to kill him while they occupied the town over the last three weeks.

"They (rebels) asked me: 'Are you a supporter of Kuol Manyang [South Sudan's defense minister and former governor of Jonglei]?' but I said I am [an] Upper Nile citizen," Garang said, recalling a conversation he had repeatedly with rebels while they controlled the town.

Other patients were not so lucky.

When Sudan Tribune visited Bor hospital corpses were scattered across the hospital wards and compound. In a small room, bodies of children had been dumped.

Garang, who lost his sight in 2002, said he knew the adults who had been killed as they had been fellow patients but did not know where the children had come from.

"Two of them were sleeping near my bed," he said of bodies of two men in the hospital compound. He remembers them as Garang and Hussein. The late Garang, he says, had one leg amputated and thought he would not be killed.

"Because I am blind, they are the one who brought for me food and water. After they were shot here" he said, pointing to the bed next to his. "I have to eat biscuits and drink water that they left near me."

Another survivor, Mary Yar, who is in her sixties and cannot recall her exact age, said she was asked for sex by rebel soldiers.

"I told them to kill me instead because I can't have sex with children," she recalls.

"Thanks to God, they left me but other younger women were raped. They had to run to UNMISS afterwards," said Yar.

The two elderly patients appear to be the only patients that survived. Some patients starved to death, while others were shot and killed in their beds.

Bor's residential areas remain dangerous, the army claims, as some rebels might still be in hiding four days after the military regained control of the town.

The market on the outskirts of Bor has been reduced to rubble.

A group of MPs who visited Bor with Sudan Tribune said that 2,500 people have been killed in Bor, based on reports from community leaders.

James Nhial, an armed civilian who visited Bor after government troops retook the town on Saturday, said there are many bodies.

"You see the birds," he told Sudan Tribune pointing north of Bor where he passed while coming from Baidit Payam [district].

"I don't know what the government is doing! They should collect the people and bury them," he said.

"It is poisonous to smell decaying bodies," he said.

Government troops that recaptured the town for the second time since the conflict began said they are overwhelmed.

Lt. Gen. Malual Ayom Dor, the deputy chief of staff for administration in South Sudan's army who is now commanding the forces that captured Bor, said collecting the dead bodies is challenging.

"Yesterday, we buried many bodies. We started collecting from [the] hospital, market and the main road," Dor told reporters on Tuesday in Bor.

"The soldiers are pursuing the enemy and the force left behind here cannot do everything in a day," he said.

Malek Alier, a Member of Parliament representing Bor South in Juba, says the killing of civilians and burning of the market was planned before the attack on the town.

"I have been expecting it. This is a spirit of anarchy," Malek told Sudan Tribune in Bor on Tuesday. [\(Back to Top\)](#)

Business, bus trips to South Sudan picking

New Vision Kampala, 24/01/14 - The effects of the defeat of rebels in the South Sudanese towns of Bor and Malakal a few days ago are fast being felt hundreds of kilometres away in Uganda among the business community.

New Vision has learnt that this week trips from Kampala to Juba have gone up significantly in the last few days. At Arua Park the volume of cargo trucks departing Kampala for South Sudan has also gone up.

Stephen Odongkara, the deputy Police Commander Integrated Highways told *New Vision* that the number of buses departing Kampala for Juba daily has shot up from 14 up from about six.

Odongkara, who monitors movement of vehicles on Kampala-Juba route, said: "I am in touch with SPLA officers on the other side of the border and they have assured me traffic is moving well."

Agents of a number of bus companies that ply the Juba route told *New Vision* that they have noticed an upsurge in the number of passengers booking tickets. Some of the companies plying the Juba route include Bakulu coach, Baby Coach, Friendship, Simba, Lol, Iman and Kampala coach

An agent of Bakulu Coach said they had also reduced the fares because it is now less risky to go to Juba. It now costs between sh50,000 to sh65,000 to travel from Kampala to Juba by bus — down from sh100,000 two weeks ago.

Robert Acidri, a truck driver, who said he had received two bookings from South Sudanese business men to transport cargo to Juba this week so far, was upbeat.

"It is great to be getting business again. I hear there are still a lot of roadblocks, which makes the trip longer, but that is ok."

Violence flared up in Juba in mid-December last year and later spread to other key towns, resulting in the death of over 1,000 people and displacement hundreds of thousands.

But the calm returning after the defeat of the rebel forces by a combined force of South Sudan army and Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) in the last few days has given the country a renewed hope.

Salume Keke, one of the travelers bound for Juba, who was returning after fleeing the fighting in December, said she hopes to resume her food kiosk business at Customs in Juba next week.

Asked if it was not early for her to be returning, she said: "My children will be returning to school next week. Where do I get fees if I don't go back?"

When contacted about the development, Kacita said it was not yet time for Ugandans to begin returning to South Sudan.

“As Kacita anybody going to any part of South Sudan does not have our blessing. It is still premature for anyone to risk their life regardless of any amount of profit,” said Kacita’s spokesperson, Issa Sekiito.

He added: “We have lost many colleagues. Most of them their bodies have not yet been returned.”

He said although there is a cessation in fighting, the situation is not yet safe.

Over the past five years, South Sudan has been the main destination for Uganda traders.

According to Bank of Uganda, in 2012, Uganda exported goods worth \$403.68m (sh1 trillion) to Sudan. As of November 2013, exports stood at \$238m (sh528.7b), which was nearly equal to all our exports to Asia, Middle East and the Americas combined (which totaled \$272m).

During the same period, Uganda imported \$6m (sh15b) worth of goods from South Sudan.

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Somalia, South Sudan likely to join EAC this year

The EastAfrican Nairobi, 24/01/14 - Eastern Africa hotspots Somalia and South Sudan could be admitted to the East African Community later this year after the bloc’s council of ministers put the ascensions top of the 2014 agenda.

The EAC secretariat said it was vetting South Sudan for possible admission into the regional bloc by April despite the deteriorating security situation in the world’s newest state.

“We are just waiting for official invitation from South Sudan and Somalia to begin the verification process because their suitability for admission will entirely depend on the advice we get from our technical team,” EAC Deputy-Secretary General Charles Njoroge told the *Business Daily* in Nairobi last week.

The Council of Ministers said it would send the verification teams “at an appropriate time” through its chairperson, Kenya’s EAC, trade and tourism Secretary Phyllis Kandie.

The EAC technical team is expected to undertake a maiden evaluation of Somalia.

Similarly, South Sudan whose membership was put on hold last year after the technical team cited poor market economy structures and weak governance institutions, was up to December tipped for admission into the bloc from April.

A power struggle pitting President Salva Kiir against his former deputy Riek Machar has pushed South Sudan back to armed conflict while Somalia is prone to terrorist attacks from armed groups.

While the official statements suggest the hostilities have not affected the status of the states’ applications, some members have called for suspension of the admission until an “acceptable” level of political stability is established.

Article Three of EAC Treaty authorises the Council of Ministers to negotiate admission deals with States with compatible social and economic policies.

Such States have to demonstrate progress in building a market-driven economy, ability to strengthen region’s economy, geographical proximity and interdependence of the bloc.

The article, however, pegs approval of membership on applicant’s adherence to “universally acceptable principles of good governance, democracy, rule of law, respect for human rights and social justice.”

Kenya and Uganda have particularly been keen on the admission of South Sudan which is already a key market for their goods. If admitted, Somalia and South Sudan would be Kenya’s third and fourth largest export markets after Uganda and Tanzania.

The Kenya National Bureau of Statistics data shows Kenya sold foodstuff, manufactured goods, medicines, chemicals and textile, to South Sudan worth Sh18 billion by the end of 2012.

Over the same period, Kenya's exports to Somalia reached Sh19.2 billion, miraa forming 90 per cent of the consignment.

Kenya exported goods worth Sh16.2 billion to Rwanda and only Sh5.3 billion to Burundi, the two other EAC members.

Kenya – together with Uganda and Rwanda – have also been discussing with South Sudan some joint infrastructure projects like railways, roads, oil export pipelines and oil refinery

A number of Kenyan firms — among them financial services providers like Britam, Co-operative Bank, Resolution Health, KCB, UAP Insurance and Equity Bank — have established operations in South Sudan.

Official admission would see it drop tariffs and other cross-border restrictions, giving easy access to more goods from its neighbours.

If the two countries admission is rejected, they could still participate in the bloc's affairs as associate members under Article Three of the treaty, without having a vote or benefits such as preferential access to markets.

Nile explorer hits road again today

Daily Monitor Kampala, 24/01/14 - British explorer Levison Wood will continue his expedition today to Jinja District as he attempts to become the first man to trail the River Nile on foot.

On December 4, last year, Mr Wood started his tour from Rwanda through Tanzania. He arrived in Kampala last weekend after spending 47 days on the road and covering a distance of 1,000 km.

This newspaper caught up with him at the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) offices in Kamwokya, a Kampala suburb, on Wednesday where he was finalising with documentation to head to Murchison Falls National Park.

According to Mr Wood, Uganda is a friendlier country than others where he has been to.

"I have moved from Rwanda, Tanzania and now I am in Uganda. I find everyday different," he said.

Mr Andrew Sseguya, the executive director of UWA, said the explorer was also raising money for a charity organisation, Uganda Conservation Foundation, supported by the wildlife body.

Although the 31-year-old has faced several challenges on his tour, Mr Wood said he is more worried about South Sudan due to the instability there.

"I will not go there until there is peace and when everything stabilises," he said.

After the end of the journey, the ex-Afghanistan soldier will write a book about his voyage, entitled "Walking the Nile". ([Back to Top](#))

UN Security Council welcomes South Sudan ceasefire agreement

Xinhua United Nations, 23/01/14 - The U.N. Security Council on Thursday welcomed the signing of a cease-fire agreement in South Sudan, calling it the first step toward comprehensive reconciliation and nation-building.

The council members called on all parties to immediately and fully implement the agreement as the first step in a longer process of ensuring durable peace and rule of law, national reconciliation, and the building of effective state institutions, the council said in a press statement.

Representatives of President Salva Kiir and former deputy president Riek Machar signed the agreement earlier Thursday on the cessation of hostilities, after three weeks of talks mediated by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa.

The ceasefire seeks to ease the political dispute in the world's youngest nation between Kiir and Machar, who was removed from office in July 2013 and later accused of attempting a coup.

The 15-member council applauded the tireless efforts by IGAD to achieve the agreement and commended the African Union for its attempts to find a lasting solution to the ongoing crisis in South Sudan and its underlying causes, the statement said.

The council members voiced their unwavering support for the U.N. mission in South Sudan and strongly condemned the targeted and indiscriminate killings, widespread sexual and gender-based violence, recruitment and use of children, and arbitrary detention.

The council said that some of the conducts may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity and that those responsible for human rights violations and abuses must be held accountable. [\(Back to Top\)](#)

EU welcomes South Sudan deal

KUNA Brussels, 24/01/14 - EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton has welcomed the agreement on the cessation of hostilities in South Sudan, signed in Addis Ababa on Thursday.

"This agreement must now be turned to reality and the parties must move immediately to implement in good faith. This means that the killing must end now," she said in a statement.

Ashton appealed to all parties to engage in discussions excluding none who can contribute to a resolution and to reconciliation. "The eyes of the world are on South Sudan. What began so promisingly and after so many sacrifices in 2011 must never again be squandered as it has been in the last four weeks. The political leadership of South Sudan must now rise to this challenge," she added. [\(Back to Top\)](#)

South Sudan agrees truce, but crisis not over yet

AFP Nairobi, 24/01/14 - South Sudan's government and rebels have signed a ceasefire, but analysts warn that bringing battling gunmen on the ground under control and making the truce stick is far from guaranteed.

Weeks of war in the impoverished young nation is feared to have spiralled out of the control of the political leaders, who themselves bickered for weeks to agree even a first stage deal, signed late Thursday in a luxury hotel in neighbouring Ethiopia.

But even as the ceasefire was signed, government delegation head Nhial Deng Nhial said he was sceptical of the rebels' capacity to rein in their forces, "given that the bulk of the rebels are made up of civilians" - essentially any one of the countless people who have kept hold of their guns after decades of conflict.

The fighting has seen waves of brutal revenge attacks, as fighters and ethnic militia use the violence to loot and settle old scores, with the United Nations and rights workers reporting that horrific atrocities have been committed by both sides.

Finding a deal for lasting peace - and implementing that on the ground - will be the hard part.

"Anything that stops the fighting is welcomed, but it is obvious to say, implementation is key, and past deals in South Sudan have remained little more than ink on paper," said a Western diplomat.

"These two sides have gone so far in a few short weeks... it was hard enough to get the delegations in Ethiopia to the table, let alone those who have been doing the actual fighting."

The world's newest nation has been at war since December 15, with thousands killed and close to half a million forced to flee their homes. Some have sought refuge in UN bases from the ethnic violence, other to large, squalid camps while tens of thousands of others have fled to neighbouring countries.

There will be no quick fix: billions of dollars worth of international aid, advice and development help were already poured in to the fledgling nation after the end of civil war with Sudan in 2005, but that cash apparently did little to prevent the terrifyingly swift collapse of the state.

Even for the most careful watchers of the complex power struggles of South Sudan, the conflict - and its brutal nature with neighbour turning on neighbour - were shockingly fast.

The cessation of hostilities deal, only the first of many steps to hammer out a final peace deal and pave the way for badly-needed national reconciliation, leaves a volatile situation on the ground.

Jok Madut Jok, a former senior government official and academic now running the Sudd Institute, said the challenges were huge.

A political settlement, including a potential future deal to compromise on power sharing, could "increase the level of impunity and reward for those who engage in violent efforts to get political office," Jok said.

Many are deeply pessimistic that even with a deal in place, the conflict pitting members of Kiir's Dinka people - the country's largest group - against Machar's Nuer tribe has reached a point of no return.

"With atrocities carried out by both sides, any attempt to pretend communities at odds with each other can simply forgive and forget is nonsense," the diplomat added.

"Hard work and proper reconciliation, not only among politicians but crucially at community level, will be key... and very hard."

On the ground, the situation appears comparable to that of the 1983-2005 southern civil war when Sudan was a united nation, when the government controlled towns but multiple rebel forces claimed swathes of countryside.

Violence is rooted in decades-old grievances between former rebels turned political leaders, combined with unhealed wounds left over from the civil war that preceded South Sudan's independence from Khartoum in 2011.

Diplomats and mediators from the regional bloc IGAD spoke bluntly of the risks that remained.

"Failure to stop this atrocity and crisis will lead to a protracted conflict that will include all of us," IGAD's special envoy to South Sudan, Seyoum Mesfin, said at the signing ceremony.

Reconciling rivals will need major political changes, said Mahmood Mamdani, a professor at Columbia University in the US and Uganda's Makerere Institute of Social Research, in an article written before the deal.

Warning of a "radically politicised ethnicity", Mamdani said that "opposition to Kiir's leadership is at several levels: personal, ethnic, and ideological".

Before the conflict, Kiir "moved to undercut whatever remained of accountability structures within the state and the party in order to hold on to power".

Jok said people must come together at a local level to strike peace deals too, so that political rivals in the capital do not again trigger battles in the villages.

Jok said such local ceasefires would "serve as the message to our leaders, that over are the times when we get sucked into power struggles on behalf of people who don't care about us and our lives to begin with." ([Back to Top](#))

Fear remains after South Sudan deal

AFP Juba, 24/01/14 - South Sudan's warring sides may have signed a ceasefire, but David Choul is not ready to leave the UN peacekeepers' base, to which he had fled when gunmen rampaged through his neighbourhood during the brutal conflict.

"I'm not leaving until I know I'll be safe outside, and I don't know when that will be," said Choul, who is one of 17,000 people who have squeezed into the former sports ground for safety.

Like him, other South Sudanese traumatised by the killings and other atrocities since fighting broke out on December 15 are waiting to see if the peace would indeed hold as pledged by political leaders.

"This morning... people have been busy queuing for the latrines, or to get clean water, or waiting for a cup of tea... no one I know is preparing to leave yet, they want to wait to see how things turn out," Choul said.

As news broke of Thursday's ceasefire deal, "everyone crowded around those with a radio, and while there was relief at the news, but it was not celebration," the 23-year-old student recounted.

"It is a good step, but how can you celebrate when you are still too frightened to leave the camp?" he said, speaking by crackling telephone from inside the UN base. "We are still so worried."

The fighting that has seized the country for over a month has seen waves of brutal revenge attacks, as fighters and ethnic militia took the opportunity to loot and settle old scores.

Both the United Nations and rights workers have reported horrific atrocities committed by both sides.

The agreement, signed late Thursday in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa by representatives of President Salva Kiir and rebel delegates loyal to ousted vice president Riek Machar, was greeted by cheers from regional peace brokers and diplomats.

In the camps where South Sudanese are still hiding, the reaction was more muted.

Over 67,000 people are sheltering inside UN bases across South Sudan, fearing they will be killed if they leave, while more than half a million people have been forced from their homes.

Aid workers and analysts believe up to 10,000 people have died.

No quick resolution

On the dusty streets of Juba -- where daily life in many districts appears largely to be returning to normal -- residents were also cautiously optimistic about the agreement.

"This (the ceasefire) is what we want and what we have been praying for," said Mary Konga, a 43-year old lady selling vegetables in Juba's Munuki district. "We still pray that total peace comes to our country, we are tired of suffering."

Others were more sceptical, saying they would wait to see if it was implemented.

"We want peace, but we want to see also the implementation of it as agreed by the two parties," said Wani Edward, a builder.

In the impoverished settlement of Minkammen, some 200 kilometres (130 miles) north of Juba, teacher Simon Thon said that the news had been received with relief.

Minkammen, a once-tiny riverbank settlement of a few thatch huts, has swollen by some 80,000 people, who fled from fighting in the key town of Bor, risking their lives to make the dangerous crossing across the White Nile river to escape rebel attacks.

"It is good news, but people are still waiting for what it really means," said Simon Thon, who fled after rebels stormed Bor, shooting those residents who ran and using machetes or spears on those they caught.

"We need it to really end the fighting, and for that we must pray that everyone obeys," he added, speaking by telephone.

Thon fled with his family including his heavily pregnant wife, who has since given birth to a son, born beneath a tree in the camp.

"Things are calm here, but people are still very, very frightened," he added. "There is no way people can just go back home and forget what happened." ([Back to Top](#))

South Sudan looters steal food to feed 220,000 for a month- UN

Reuters Geneva, 24/01/14 - The United Nations World Food Programme estimates that it may have lost more than 3,700 tonnes of food in looting in South Sudan, enough to feed 220,000 people for a month, WFP spokeswoman Elisabeth Byrs said on Friday.

WFP's warehouses in Malakal had been almost entirely emptied, she told a regular U.N. briefing in Geneva. The agency was working to recover lost stocks wherever possible and trying to protect remaining stocks, she said. ([Back to Top](#))

Japan eyes normalizing SDF operations in S. Sudan after cease-fire

Kyodo Tokyo, 24/01/14 - Japan will consider fully resuming the Self-Defense Forces' participation in a U.N. peacekeeping mission in South Sudan as the African country has achieved a cease-fire deal with rebels, Defense Minister Itsunori Onodera said Friday.

"If the situation stabilizes, we want to fully focus on our original mission of building infrastructure," Onodera told a press conference.

The SDF troops have been confined to their base, limiting their operations to offering aid to people fleeing from increasing violence in weeks of warfare that have reportedly killed thousands of soldiers and civilians.

Onodera also said Japan will stick to its earlier plan for expanding the field of SDF operations from Central Equatoria State, where the capital Juba is located, to Eastern and Western Equatoria states.

On Thursday, South Sudan's government and rebels signed a peace deal that represents significant progress in ending political friction that turned violent in December. ([Back to Top](#))

OP-ED - South Sudan on fire

By Ivan Simonovic on Sudantribune.com 23/01/14 - "We were picked up at checkpoints or during house searches. They recognized us by our accents, or by the traditional marks on our faces. 200-400 of us were brought to a room of a police station, so small that we were suffocating. Suddenly they opened fire on us from two windows. I fell to the ground, and was protected by the bodies of dead and injured lying on top of me. Some of the wounded were moaning, and they opened fire twice again during the night."

This is how a survivor described to me the killings at a police station in Gudele in Juba, South Sudan. He is just one of many victims of horrible crimes committed by all sides, whose only fault is to be from the wrong ethnicity.

On 14 July 2011, South Sudan celebrated becoming the UN's 193rd and newest member state, after decades of fighting for independence during which 2.5 million South Sudanese lost their lives. But today, a power struggle between its President Salva Kiir (ethnic Dinka)

and former Vice-President Riek Machar (ethnic Nuer) has degenerated into an increasingly ethnically driven armed conflict.

So far, thousands have been killed during fighting and in inter-ethnic attacks on Nuer and Dinka civilians. Hundreds of thousands have been displaced and are looking for a safe haven. There are credible reports of mass and extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, sexual violence, looting, arson and wanton destruction of property as well as the use of children as “soldiers.”

Who started this conflict? And who is targeting civilians? The “truth” depends on what ethnic background you have. When I talked to displaced people, victims and their families in camps in Juba, Bentiu and Bor, I found their perception of the conflict so influenced by their ethnic affiliation that it was as if they lived in different realities.

In such a situation, it is imperative that the UN monitors and publicly reports on human rights violations, victims and perpetrators. Only impartially established facts will prevent false rumours from further fuelling the conflict, help to settle grievances and bring accountability in the long term.

South Sudan has a tradition of impunity. There was never any accountability for crimes committed during the previous major conflict involving the same two ethnic groups in 1991. This has contributed to history tragically repeating itself. It is thus very encouraging that the African Union Peace and Security Council has decided to establish an international commission of inquiry on causes of the conflict and the crimes that have been committed.

The Chief of Staff of South Sudan’s armed forces told me: “When we disagree we do not shout: we shoot. There is a culture of violence.” To protect civilians from the violence, and learning from the tragedies of Rwanda and Srebrenica, the UN is trying to help its newest member in an unprecedented way: the United Nations Mission in South Sudan has opened the doors to its premises to provide protection to about 70,000 people who fear for their lives because of their ethnicity.

It is a huge challenge to provide them with food, health care, water and sanitation. I saw a hospital without any medication in Bentiu, people surviving with very limited water supplies in Bor, and 20,000 displaced squeezed into a space amounting to only four square meters per person in a camp in Juba.

But the toughest challenge of all is to protect them physically: a small UN compound in Akobo was stormed by armed youths who killed 20 civilians, and also two Indian UN peacekeepers who were trying to protect them. The UN’s peacekeeping force in South Sudan desperately needs to be strengthened and become more robust.

“One month of fighting has set South Sudan back a decade,” a development expert told me in Juba. Development statistics illustrate how tough life is: half the population lives in poverty and is malnourished. A young woman is as likely to die giving birth as she is to finish primary education. One in every ten children dies before his or her fifth birthday.

Yet, South Sudan can become stable and prosperous. It is a country rich in oil, which amounts to two-thirds of its GDP. Instead of being wasted on mismanagement, corruption and conflict, revenue should be used for social development. The window of opportunity is now. The UN should do everything it can to protect the people of South Sudan and support efforts to stop the war and ensure sustainable peace. The people of South Sudan deserve a better future. The oil will not last forever.

Ivan Simonovic, is the United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights [\(Back to Top\)](#)

Why I am not so keen on accusations of partiality by UNMISS

*By Jacob J. Akol on **Gurtong** 23/01/14* - From where I stand, there is a difference between those who run into the UNMISS compound in fear of their lives and those whose lives are not threatened. Provided those who run away from a battle field, be they SPLA soldiers or

rebel soldiers who throw away their guns and uniforms or surrender them to the UNMISS, they deserve protection.

If a victorious rebel commander wants the UN to hand over SPLA soldiers they have just defeated, would it be right for UNMISS to hand them over to the rebels? Would it be right for UNMISS to hand over to the rebels any arms that had been surrendered to them by escaping SPLA soldiers? If your answers are negative to all those questions, the same answers to the same questions should apply to the other party.

I do not speak for UNMISS – they do that very well for themselves - but my understanding is that as far as the UNMISS is concerned, the two warring parties are all South Sudanese and anyone who has abandoned the battle field and seeking protection for his or her life deserves to be protected. That is the meaning of Neutrality to which UNMISS is adhering. Anything else, including the whereabouts of the weapons, can be sorted out later with cooler minds and impartial investigation.

Now Minister Makuei! To tell you the truth, I do not know or understand why Minister Makuei Lueth wanted to enter the UNMISS compound (in Bor) full of those seeking protection for their lives in a war in which his government troops were a party and victorious. If he had fear for his life and wanted to join those under the UNMISS protection, he should have been admitted, otherwise I don't see the point other than that he wanted to go in there and identify who was who under the UN protection for immediate or later abstraction. UNMISS cannot allow such possibility.

There have been so many examples of this sort of thing around the world in which victorious parties (Bosnia and Rwanda readily spring to mind) overwhelmed or deceived protecting forces to surrendering those under their protection to later end up in mass graves. Should UNMISS have opened the door of a protective compound to a government Minister whose troops have just defeated those people in the compound seeking UNMISS protection? Would UNMISS allow Riek Machar or any of his virtual ministers entry into their compound in which civilians and defeated SPLA soldiers were sheltered? I think not, otherwise they would be a party to their later torture or death.

You can argue, "but Makuei is a minister of the legitimate government of South Sudan, not a rebel leader!" That's true; but there are diplomatic rules governing these things among nations and international bodies, unless you want to say that South Sudan is exempted from such rules.

Note that I am not saying we abandon any legitimate complaints against UNMISS. They should be raised and trust that our government will do the right thing by following diplomatic channels, while we concentrate on dealing with the real issues we ourselves caused in the first place.

When a gunman in the Libyan Embassy in London fired and killed a British policewoman near the embassy in the centre of London, diplomatic rules prevented the British police from storming the embassy and arrest the gunman. Same diplomatic rules later allowed the killer to return home to Libya. Did the British public like it? Of course not; but they knew that their government had no choice but follow the international rules and laws to which they are a party, otherwise the whole world would turn into chaos in which only criminal top dogs would prosper!

I am not sure we are fully appreciative yet of the near to permanent damage this conflict has done to our country and people. When I was in Juba last week, I heard reports that even spiritual and peace-makers like Arch Bishop Daniel Deng was denied giving comfort to our Nuer brothers and sisters by angry asylum seekers themselves at the UNMISS compound in Juba because Deng happened to be a Dinka! And is it not really tragic to know that even former government minister Changson Chang and Chairman of government's own Anti-Corruption Commission Justice John Gatwich find themselves better protected in the UNMISS compound rather than accept promises of protection from our government in their

own houses or hotel because they are Nuer and fear elements within our security forces? Is that the fault of UNMISS?

That's why I am not so hot on us focusing on alleged partiality of UNMISS at the moment and had rather we search for peace, reconciliation and solidarity amongst our own people. That is the ultimate sure way of keeping other people from interfering in our own affairs. Any continued conflict and search for external culprits keeps us in denial of the tragedy we have brought upon ourselves and open many doors for interference of real international criminals with deadly weapons in their command for hard cash.

It is reassuring to hear President Kiir say that he is “very keen and resolute to see UN and other international organisations are respected and accorded protection unreservedly.” Unguarded utterances, particularly from our leaders, can easily turn polemic and endanger the lives of UN/UNMISS staff, many who are saving the lives of thousands of our people daily. Our people, now badly in need, can end up the losers and I fear they will not pat our government on back for it. Think about them, not about our bruised egos. We are members of the United Nations and we need that organisation right now than we ever did. As long as we remain members of the UN, we need to think things through very carefully. Accusations of impartiality by the world's body are very serious and they need to be followed through the right diplomatic channels. [\(Back to Top\)](#)

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