



# United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)

Media & Spokesperson Unit  
Communications & Public Information Office

## MEDIA MONITORING REPORT

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# Highlights

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## S Sudan conflict: Sudan president to meet Salva Kiir (BBC)

Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir has travelled to Juba for talks with President Salva Kiir over the conflict in South Sudan, state media say.

Fighting is continuing in South Sudan as the warring parties meet in Ethiopia to try to agree a ceasefire. So far no substantive progress has been made.

The conflict pits supporters of Mr Kiir against rebels led by his sacked deputy, Riek Machar.

At least 1,000 people have been killed since violence erupted on 15 December.

The unrest started after South Sudan's president accused Mr Machar of attempting a coup - which he denies.

Nearly 200,000 people have been displaced in the conflict, which has taken on ethnic undertones. Mr Kiir is from the majority Dinka community and Mr Machar from the Nuer group.

### 'Peaceful resolution'

State media in Sudan reported that President Bashir left for the South Sudanese capital, Juba, on Monday to discuss the crisis with Mr Kiir - accompanied by a team of senior ministers.

Earlier, the foreign ministry spokesman in Khartoum reaffirmed Sudan's wish to see "a continuation of the political process aimed at finding a peaceful resolution to the conflict in South Sudan", according to AFP news agency.

Sudan relies on revenue from oil transported through its southern neighbours' pipelines, which Khartoum fears will be disrupted by the fighting.

Up until Friday, the talks in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, were conducted by mediators. Now, teams representing the opposing factions in South Sudan are expected to negotiate face-to-face.

A preliminary meeting was held late on Saturday. Key issues are establishing a ceasefire, and the rebels' demand for the release of what they see as political prisoners.

But substantive talks failed to get under way on Sunday, delayed by disagreements over the agenda and - an official was quoted as saying - by "protocol issues".

It seems each side is trying to gain as much leverage on the battlefield before they even consider a ceasefire, says the BBC's Africa editor Richard Hamilton.

International mediators may be losing patience with South Sudan's leaders whose delays are costing hundreds of lives, he says.

It is now hoped talks will begin in earnest on Monday.

### Fresh fighting

Heavy fighting is continuing to the south of Bor, one of two cities held by rebels, says the BBC's Alastair Leithead, who is on the road between Juba and Bor.

The rebels are a former military division made up of thousands of men who switched sides, our correspondent says.

Until a ceasefire is agreed, fighting is expected to continue or even intensify, he adds.

On Sunday, a South Sudanese army general was killed when a government convoy was ambushed.

South Sudan is the world's newest state. It was formed in 2011, gaining independence from Sudan after decades of conflict.

The latest trouble has its roots in tensions that go back long before 2011.

## **Sudan's Bashir arrives in South Sudan (New Vision, Uganda)**

Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir arrived in the South Sudanese capital Juba on Monday for a day of talks on the country's three-week-old unrest, an AFP correspondent said.

Bashir was greeted at Juba airport by South Sudan's Vice President James Wani Igga, before heading to the presidential palace for talks with his counterpart President Salva Kiir. Bashir made no public comment upon arriving, although Khartoum on Sunday reaffirmed Sudan's wish to see "a continuation of the political process aimed at finding a peaceful resolution to the conflict in South Sudan". Sudan's foreign ministry also underlined Sudan's willingness "to offer everything in its power to ensure success of the initiative by IGAD", the East African regional bloc brokering the talks.

The conflict erupted on December 15, pitting army units loyal to President Kiir against a loose alliance of ethnic militia forces and mutinous army commanders nominally headed by Riek Machar, a former vice president who was sacked in July.

South Sudan won independence from Khartoum in 2011 after decades of war, but is dependent on Sudan for exporting its oil.

## **South Sudan's Peace Talks Open (VOA)**

South Sudan's warring factions have opened peace talks in Ethiopia, as violence continues in at least two regions of South Sudan, with government troops advancing on Bor, the rebel-held capital of Jonglei state.

Representatives for President Salva Kiir and ex-vice president Riek Machar took part in opening ceremonies for talks on Saturday.

Ethiopian Foreign Ministry spokesman Dina Mufti said the two sides would begin face-to-face negotiations in Addis Ababa on Sunday, following days of delays.

Mufti said several items would be high on the agenda. "Definitely cease-fire will be on the top of agenda, then the issue of opening humanitarian corridors, the issue of releasing detainees and other issues," he said. Mufti said negotiators were anxious to find a resolution to the fighting, which has left more than 1,000 people dead.

"All sides are feeling the need, the urgency, for a cease-fire and everything else," he said. U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said Sunday that Washington would support those seeking peace, but would work for international pressure against those who used force to gain any advantage. Kerry said negotiations must be serious - not a "gimmick."

South Sudan's unrest began in mid-December, when renegade soldiers attacked an army headquarters. President Kiir accused former vice president Machar of a coup attempt.

On Saturday, there were reports of heavy fighting near Bor, the rebel-held capital of Jonglei state, which government troops have launched an effort to reclaim.

Earlier, forces loyal to Machar said they were preparing to advance from Bor to the national capital, Juba. But in a Friday interview with Britain's *Telegraph*, Machar said his forces would hold back on attacking the capital in hopes of achieving a "negotiated settlement."

The French News Agency said explosions and automatic artillery fire rattled a government district in the capital on Saturday.

The talks in Ethiopia are being mediated by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), an East African regional bloc.

EU Horn of Africa representative Alexander Rondos, who is at the meeting, said the responsibility to find a solution to the conflict rested in the hands of South Sudan's political leadership.

"The leadership of South Sudan, the entire political leadership, needs to find a resolution," he said. "there are no alibis, only they can find that solution. And they must do everything to help the negotiators from IGAD to find that solution and very quickly," he said.

Machar said Wednesday that President Kiir was responsible for much of the unrest. He said peace could not be achieved under the president's leadership.

Witnesses said some of the violence was ethnically motivated, with supporters of Kiir, a member of the Dinka tribe, and supporters of Machar, from the Nuer tribe, targeting each other.

### **South Sudan rivals fail to commit face-to-face talks (Sudan Tribune)**

January 5, 2014 (ADDIS ABABA) – South Sudanese political rivals gathered in Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa for peace talks on Saturday failed to agree on direct talks to end weeks of violence in the country.

Ethiopian officials on Saturday confirmed that delegates representing South Sudan President Salva Kiir and his former deputy and rebel leader, Riek Machar, were set to start direct talks on Sunday.

This is third time for the two warring parties to delay negotiations since they arrived in Addis Ababa on Wednesday. The talks are being brokered by East African regional bloc, the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

Mediators refused comments to *Sudan Tribune* on why the direct talks are still facing setbacks.

However, ongoing fierce fighting on ground in parts of South Sudan as well as the rebels' unmet demands for the release of senior political prisoners are believed to be causes delaying the formal ceasefire talks.

A General from the South Sudanese army (SPLA) was reportedly killed on Sunday in fighting outside the town of Bor in Jonglei state, which remains under rebel control.

Sources close to the talks late on Sunday told *Sudan Tribune* that the two sides returned to indirect talks through the IGAD mediators on Sunday as both sides failed to agree on an agenda.

The mediator's top priority is for the warring parties to agree to an immediate ceasefire and the release of the remaining political prisoners.

However as fighting rages on for control of Jonglei and oil-producing Unity and Upper Nile states, the sides seem to be trying to gain the advantage on the ground to enhance their negotiating position.

The African Union (AU) and the international community has mounted pressure against the President Kiir and his former deputy, who Kiir sacked last year, to reach on an immediate truce.

The US government has also urged the two parties to commit to direct talks to bring a rapid and tangible progress to end the ongoing conflict which has claimed lives of over 1,000 people and displaced tens of thousands, according to the UN.

"The parties must use these talks to make rapid, tangible progress on a cessation of hostilities, humanitarian access, and the status of political detainees," State Department spokeswoman Marie Harf said in a statement on Saturday.

"There can be no military solution to this conflict," she added.

"Forging a durable and lasting peace depends on resolving the underlying political causes of the conflict."

Fighting in the world's youngest nation erupted mid-December in disputed circumstances. Kiir has accused forces loyal to Machar of staging a coup attempt.

Machar and the 11 politicians arrested after the fighting began, have all categorically dismissed the allegations, claiming that a fight began spontaneously among soldiers in the presidential guard.

## **South Sudan general killed in ambush (BBC)**

A South Sudanese army general has been killed in fighting outside the rebel-held town of Bor. A BBC correspondent with government troops said a convoy advancing on Bor came under heavy fire in an ambush.

The fighting is continuing as the warring parties meet in Ethiopia to try to agree a ceasefire. Substantive talks appear to have been delayed once again.

The conflict pits supporters of President Salva Kiir against rebels led by his sacked deputy Riek Machar. It began on 15 December after the president accused Mr Machar of attempting a coup - which he denies. At least 1,000 people have been killed and nearly 200,000 displaced in the conflict, which has taken on ethnic undertones. Mr Kiir is from the Dinka community and Mr Machar from the Nuer group.

### **Fighting rages**

The BBC's Alastair Leithead was travelling with government troops from the capital, Juba, on Sunday when the convoy came under attack about 25km (15 miles) from Bor.

The commanding general - who has not been named - was killed in the ambush.

The government has been sending reinforcements to try to retake Bor in recent days, bringing the total number of army troops involved to some 2,000.

A whole division of the South Sudanese army has joined the rebel side, so the fighting in Bor in effect involves two trained armies, our correspondent adds.

He says he saw evidence of the intensity of the fighting, with burnt-out tanks by the side of the road.

Fighting is also continuing in other areas. Army spokesman Philip Aguer said there had been clashes in the oil-producing states of Unity and Upper Nile in the north.

Up until Friday, the talks in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, were conducted by mediators. Now, teams representing the opposing factions are expected to negotiate face-to-face.

A preliminary meeting was held late on Saturday. Key issues are establishing a ceasefire, and the rebels' demand for the release of what they see as political prisoners.

But substantive talks failed to get under way on Sunday, delayed by disagreements over the agenda and - an official was quoted as saying - by "protocol issues".

It seems each side is trying to gain as much leverage on the battlefield before they even consider a ceasefire, says the BBC's Africa editor Richard Hamilton.

International mediators may be losing patience with South Sudan's leaders whose delays are costing hundreds of lives, he says. (Read More)

## **Key South Sudan town in dispute as warring sides prepare for peace talks (CNN)**

As warring sides prepared to hold their first face-to-face talks to end weeks of ethnic fighting in the world's newest country, clashes flared around a key town Sunday.

Nhial Majak Nhial, the mayor of Bor, told CNN that rebel troops had been driven away from his town, which has exchanged hands several times during three weeks of violence that has killed hundreds and forced about 200,000 people from their homes.

Defense Minister Kuol Manyang said government forces tried to take back the disputed town but were forced to retreat to a military base eight miles away after rebels ambushed them.

Brig. Gen. Abraham Jongroor was killed and several officers were wounded when rebels attacked, the defense minister said.

Helicopters airlifted dozens of injured government troops to a military hospital in Juba, about 125 miles (200 kilometers) away.

Bor, capital of the oil-rich Jonglei state, has been the scene of some of the heaviest fighting during the violence, as military forces have battled the rebel fighters.

"Their technique of fighting is numbers -- they are using numbers against capable and well-trained government troops," Nhial said. "Many of their men, some even children, have died."

President Salva Kiir and the rebels' leader, former Vice President Riek Machar, have sent delegations to the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, for talks to thrash out a ceasefire.

Face-to-face negotiations were scheduled to begin on Sunday but now are expected to start Monday morning, said Mahboub Maalim, executive secretary of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, a regional group mediating the talks.

### **Mediators meet both sides**

While neither Kiir nor Machar are in Addis Ababa, home of the African Union, group representatives have gathered and are talking amongst themselves on the sidelines, Maalim said.

"A lot of discussing and discussions going on for sure... we are ready to start face-to-face anytime, but we have to wait on the groups to be ready," he said.

The talks will focus on the cessation of hostilities and negative propaganda, the granting of access to monitors and to humanitarian aid workers, and the question of detainees, Maalim said on Saturday.

The proxy talks have been attended by special envoys to IGAD; the heads of negotiating teams of the two South Sudanese parties; Maalim; and the ministers of foreign affairs of Ethiopia and Kenya.

No breakthrough has come yet despite pressure on Kiir and Machar from African and Western powers to end the conflict. So far, the mediators met with representatives of both delegations to try to pin down the issues and set out a framework for the talks.

Speaking during a visit to Israel, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said the negotiations needed to be "serious."

"They cannot be a delay gimmick in order to continue the fighting and try to find advantage on the ground at the expense of the people of South Sudan," he said. "We will work to apply international pressure to any elements that attempt to use force to seize power. That is not acceptable."

### **Ethnic tensions**

But as the two sides' teams negotiate, fighting has continued in their country.

So far the violence has claimed more than 1,000 lives and displaced about 200,000 others.

Humanitarian agencies have warned that the estimated 200,000 who have fled to makeshift camps are facing dire conditions, with many lacking clean water and sanitation in makeshift camps.

The fighting began in Juba on December 15 but quickly spread across the country, with reports of mass killings soon emerging.

Kiir, from the Dinka ethnic group, accused troops loyal to Machar, from the Nuer community, of trying to launch a coup. The two have long been political rivals, and Kiir dismissed Machar, along with the Cabinet, in July.

Although the conflict began as a political power struggle, it has taken on an ethnic dimension and includes evidence of ethnically targeted killings, according to the U.N. mission in South Sudan.

Some observers have said both sides may want to gain the upper hand militarily before beginning to discuss a possible cease-fire.

South Sudan is the world's youngest nation, having seceded from Sudan in 2011 after decades of war.

### **South Sudan: S. Sudan Army Says Ready to Contain Rebellion in Strategic Towns (Sudan Tribune)**

The South Sudanese army (SPLA) said Thursday that it had the strength, ability and determination to contain the spiraling rebellions in the country's key and strategic areas, despite ongoing ceasefire talks.

"We will confidently, fiercely and consistently continue to defend this country against anybody trying to undermine peace and stability. The vileness of the crimes that have been committed should not be ignored. No matter what motivated these acts, there can be no justification for crimes against civilians, particularly against innocent women and children", said the army chief of staff James Hoth Mai.

"We did not fight to liberate this country so that it could be returned to square one again. We have had enough and we do not need to go for another war," he added during an interview with Sudan Tribune on the country's security situation.

The army, according to Mai, remains fully independent and committed to defend the constitution as part of its mandate.

"This is our first assurance which you in the media need to convey in a professional manner. Don't add, don't subtract and don't distort. This is an answer to questions about the duty and mandate of the SPLA", he stressed.

The senior army official was reacting to questions regarding the circumstances under which the SPLA prevented rebels from taking control of Bor, the capital of the country's largest state last week. "[Bor] It will be recaptured from the rebel forces within 24 hours", he assured, adding that government forces were ready to take the town from "anytime soon". "We ask our people to just wait and be patience. It is just a matter of time".

The army chief also warned civilians to stay away from the conflict after it emerged that some people had also become part of the fighting either forcefully or without knowing its causes. "There are still some civilians around Bor. Some of these civilians are young people who do not know what they are fighting for. If you ask any of them now they will not tell you. They just joined when they saw people moving with guns. They think that carrying a gun is a prestige", Mai said, "They are young people whose future should not be destroyed. The rebel uses them but as the national army, we recognise that they are children", he added.

The army on Friday dismissed reports that rebels, led by former vice-president Riek Machar, were moving towards the capital, Juba, saying they were instead retreating. Philip Aguer, the SPLA spokesperson told Sudan Tribune that the rebels "will be running [but] not advancing" adding that "There is no threat to Juba".

South Sudan has been in state of crisis since President Salva Kiir accused Machar and other senior members of his ruling Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement (SPLM) of attempting to oust his government in mid-December last year. Infighting within the army on 15 December spread to other parts of the capital, while reports that civilians were targeted on the basis of their ethnicity led to parts of the army rebelling in Jonglei, Unity and Upper Nile states.

### **Juba Police Dismiss Reports Of Rebels' Gunshots (Gurtong)**

On Saturday night, Juba experienced some sporadic gunshots that included the use of AK47, machine guns and artilleries from the southern part of the capital towards the central town. "Those could be just some criminals who are trying to scare people so that they can go to the houses to steal," South Sudan Police Spokesman Col. James Monday told Gurtong. "So far what I know there is nothing in Juba. Things are happening but the government is trying to control," he added.

SPLA Spokesman Col. Philip Aguer exclusively told Gurtong that, the army is still investigating on what happened and it will deliver a statement.

There are fears some SPLA officers might have defected from the government. From 9pm on Saturday night following the sporadic gunshots, Juba went silent as citizens have to take to their houses for cover.

The shooting which threatens peace, was the latest of its kind following a coup attempted that erupted on December 15.

### **South Sudan Ex-VP Backs Agreement to End Violence (VOA)**

Former South Sudan vice president Riek Machar says groups demanding the immediate cessation of hostilities are "jumping the gun," insisting representatives of the two warring factions holding peace talks in Ethiopia need to agree on the mechanisms to end the conflict.

United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon has called for the prosecution of perpetrators of human rights violations in South Sudan, and some observers are calling for the International Criminal Court (ICC) to investigate and prosecute the perpetrators.

Machar also says he backs the prosecution of those who commit gross human rights abuses and crimes against humanity in South Sudan's ongoing conflict. He blames President Salva Kiir for the ongoing conflict.

“Salva Kiir should go to the ICC,” said Machar. “He has targeted one ethnic group. He has embarked on ethnic cleansing resulting in the Juba massacre.”

The violence in South Sudan erupted after President Salva Kiir, a Dinka, accused former vice president Riek Machar, a Nuer, of attempting a coup. Machar, who is in hiding, denied the accusation.

“There was no coup d’état,” said Machar. “I am committed to a democratic process. It is Salva Kiir who did not want the democratic process in the party, nor does he want to go for the elections in 2015... There was no plan at all for a coup.”

Member states of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the African Union and other international human rights groups have demanded a cessation of hostilities in South Sudan’s conflict.

But, Machar says measures including monitoring systems would have to be agreed upon by the two parties in order to ensure both sides adhere to the ceasefire calls.

“The two teams are in Addis [Ababa], they have not yet agreed on an agenda,” said Machar. “Normally, cessation of hostilities is agreed upon and a monitoring system for verification is also agreed upon. So those who are demanding it are jumping the gun. The negotiating teams need to agree on it.”

There are news reports that forces loyal to Machar are marching towards South Sudan’s capital, Juba. But, Machar says troops from the national army have also been heading towards areas under his control.

“There are troops that are allied to Salva Kiir that are marching northwards in an attempt to capture Bor. So, we definitely would match them and we would march southwards,” he said.

The African Union has called on both sides to create the space to enable humanitarian agencies to provide assistance to the victims of the violence. Machar says he agrees with the call.

“The areas which are under our control are open for humanitarian access so that people are served. We have said that publicly, that we would give access to all the humanitarian workers so that they can provide services to the people,” said Machar.

### **More residents flee South Sudan after night of clashes (AFP)**

More residents of South Sudan's capital were packing up belongings and fleeing for the border with Uganda today after several hours of fierce clashes during the night, an AFP correspondent said.

Juba was rocked by heavy gunfire late yesterday, with exchanges of automatic and heavy weapons fire heard coming from a district in the south of the city before calm returned in the early hours of the morning.

There was speculation that another army unit had defected to the rebels, although army spokesman Philip Aguer told AFP that the government was "investigating exactly what happened" during the night.

A police spokesman said the fighting may have been caused by "criminals trying to scare people so they can go into houses and steal".

"The government is trying to control the situation," the official said.

After a terrifying night sheltering in their homes, more residents could be seen trying to get transport south to Uganda, adding to the nearly 200,000 people who have already been displaced by the three-week-old conflict.



The conflict erupted on December 15, pitting army units loyal to President Salva Kiir against a loose alliance of ethnic militia forces and mutinous army commanders nominally headed by his rival, former vice president Riek Machar.

Kiir has accused Machar of starting the unrest by attempting a coup, although Machar denies this and in turn accuses the president of conducting a violent purge of his rivals.

The fresh fighting also came as representatives from both sides were set to sit down in earnest for face-to-face talks in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa aimed at ending the conflict.

Fighting has spread across the world's youngest nation, with the rebels seizing several areas in the oil-rich north.

Fighting was reportedly continuing today in Bor, a rebel-held town north of Juba, while clashes were also reported to have broken out during the night in Yei to the south.

The conflict has already left thousands dead, according to UN officials, with both sides alleged to have committed atrocities.

### **S. Sudan clerics urge global intervention to end conflict (Sudan Tribune)**

Various religious leaders in South Sudan have expressed deep concerns over the current political and military crisis befalling the country, calling for an urgent end to the violence.

"We the undersigned bishops needed to add our voice and alarm the world that South Sudan is in crisis and needed urgent intervention. We the bishops and clergymen from South Sudan called this urgent meeting under the theme", the group said in a statement extended to *Sudan Tribune* Sunday.

"God Save Our Nation of South Sudan. We are seeking peace and ceasefire urgently and welcome the world to intervene and put an end to the rampant killing of innocent women, children, disabled and the elderly people that are dying without cause and the abuse that is now going on across the Country", the statement added.

The leaders said they decided to alarm the global community on learning the massive destruction the conflict which initially erupted in Juba and later extended to other parts of the country, had caused.

Over 1,000 people have been killed and about 200,000 displaced by the violence, largely blamed on forces loyal to the country's ex-vice president Riek Machar.

"We are condemning senseless killing of civilians and call upon the President Salva Kiir Mayardit and the former Vice President Riek Machar to stop fighting and come for dialogues and peaceful negotiation than the use of gun", the clerics said.

"We urge you to put the lives of the people first and political differences should be addressed later in love and harmony", the statement stressed.

Meanwhile, the country's religious leaders further called on the Kenyan government under the leadership president Uhuru Kenyatta, the United Nations, Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), United Kingdom and United States to approach the two leaders an an attempt to restore stability in the country.

"We are tired of war, we need peace and South Sudanese peace is African Peace. Innocent children and women are dying and wailing without knowing the cause of their death and abuse. May you come to our help and stand with us in this critical situation", said the strongly-worded statement.

Also stressed by the various religious groups was the need for peaceful co-existence among all South Sudanese in Diaspora, particularly those within the regional countries of Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopians and many others to live in peace and harmony as brothers and sisters and abstain from from political influences.

"We strongly recommended that all tribes regardless of Dinka, Nuer, Shiluk, Lotuko, etc should not be involved in violent. The conflict that has just started in Juba should not be misunderstood as Nuer-Dinka conflict but it is a political difference among the politicians", the statement further noted.

Hence, we encourage peaceful dialogues between President Kiir and Dr. Riek to accept sitting together and resolve their political differences in a manner that portray political will and patriotism to the citizens of the Republic of South Sudan, it added.

Meanwhile, regional organisations, particularly the IGAD member countries, East Africa Community (EAC) and all humanitarian agencies have been urged to extend humanitarian assistance to victims caught up in the difficult situation.

### **SPLA confirms defections in Equatoria, heavy fighting in Jonglei (Radio Tamazuj)**

South Sudan's army has confirmed that soldiers defected from barracks in Yei and Morobo in Central Equatorial and Mundri in Western Equatoria.

The army is blaming the incidents on 'telephone calls to Juba.' SPLA Spokesman Col. Philip Aguer said that people had panicked but denied that the army was collapsing.

"Defection is part of armies emerging from a post-conflict state. That is not a signal of collapse," he said, noting that the runaway soldiers fled to the forest and did not occupy any areas.

Aguer blamed the "use of phone as a medium of communication misleading people," explaining that the defection in Yei occurred after members of SPLA in Yei were told that "Juba was under fire."

He was referring to the events that occurred in Juba on Saturday night, which involved some incidents of random gunfire by 'drunken soldiers' as well as some heavy gunfights at the Qiyada barracks and Jebel area.

The army and presidential spokesmen at a press conference today did not specify which forces engaged in the clashes, but clarified that no substantial group of opposition fighters was involved.

A medical source told Radio Tamazuj that three people were killed in the latest events in Juba on Saturday night and ten others were wounded who are receiving treatment at the military hospital.

Soon after the outbreak of gunfire in Juba the events began to unfold in Yei. Led by Brigadier General Peter Tut, a group of about 120 soldiers left the barracks for the forest and were engaged in a clash at around 10:45 p.m. on Saturday, according to a local official.

Yei County Commissioner Juba David Augustine told Radio Tamazuj that two SPLA soldiers were wounded in the fighting as well as one woman who was caught in the crossfire.

Augustine said the situation had stabilized but there was still fear in the town among the citizens. He added: "We don't have any problem with any Nuer, such that somebody should go run and kill any Nuer guy. No, stay home and handle things like normal."

#### **Morobo and Mundri**

According to the army spokesman, a platoon of about 30 soldiers also defected in Morobo and an unmentioned number in Mundri as well.

Outside Mundri the runaway soldiers stopped private trucks and vehicles. "Some soldiers commandeered trucks and vehicles of business people and they started looting in Mundri, they came and looted in Lui, they came and looted in Jambo," said Aguer, mentioning two villages on the Mundri-Juba road.

"But they are being followed by the SPLA forces. These are people running away," he said.

#### **Fighting in Jonglei**

Aguer informed that the battle of Bor was still continuing on Sunday nearby Pariak. On Saturday he said the SPLA mainly fought forces 'comprised of the white army.'

He reported that this 'white army' is "composed of child soldiers who are misled through fantasy that there was a wounded warrior, that there is a left handed black person that will rule this country, and this was said 100 years ago. These people never know even Juba."

"As we speak the 'white army' are withdrawing," he said, adding: "The SPLA this morning have been heavily fighting with the forces of Riek Machar in Pariak, and we assure they are moving ahead of Pariak." During the fighting one SPLA commander was killed in an ambush about 25 km south of Bor, BBC reports, without identifying him by name or rank.

BBC correspondent Alastair Leithead was with the government convoy that was ambushed. He said 'thousands' were involved in efforts to retake Bor.

## **Ugandan Family Jewel Buried in South Sudan Mass Grave (The Observer)**

When South Sudanese rebels attacked a UN camp in Akobo, Jonglei state and shot dead 40 people, the incident hardly made news in Uganda.

As they are reportedly won't to do, they quickly buried the evidence of this massacre. But as Shifa Mwesigye writes, that incident has left one Ugandan family devastated

The family of Steven Takunya, who died in the December 19 attack on a UN camp in South Sudan, has a sad story to tell. It is a story of a high-flying jewel of the family lost in tragic, clouded circumstances.

Family members said that when they contacted Fred Opolot, the ministry of foreign Affairs spokesman, about the attack in Jonglei, he assured them that there were no Ugandans killed by the rebels. They would find out days later that in fact their own Takunya had been killed and buried with over 40 people in a mass grave.

The family says the Ugandan embassy in South Sudan is not helping either because officials there are not picking their official telephone lines. Takunya, 43, was a monitoring and evaluation officer with the International Labour Organisation.

His wife, Tracy Takunya, says he went to Sudan on November 28 to do a baseline study for three weeks.

When the fighting started, he kept in touch with his family, updating them on the status of his safety until Thursday, December 19.

"I talked to him at around 2pm and he said the situation was not bad. Once in a while they would hear gun shots. In the evening when I called his phone again, some other person picked it. He was speaking either Arabic or Dinka, I could not understand. When I got home, I saw on the news that the very place he had told me he was in, had been attacked. I contacted my in-laws and we tried to call his number but after some time it was switched off," Tracy recalls.

When the family realised he was missing, they contacted people in South Sudan. On Friday, December 20 they went to the ILO offices in Kololo and talked to the accountant who is also in charge of security coordination.

The accountant then contacted the UN as well as the ILO office in Cairo, Egypt. When they didn't get results, the wife went to the embassy of South Sudan in Kampala, which did not help. She then went to the ministry of Foreign Affairs where she obtained the telephone contacts for the Ugandan embassy in Juba. (Read More).

## **S. Sudan refugees swamp U.N. (Japan Times)**

U.N. peacekeepers in South Sudan are facing the daunting task of protecting refugees fleeing factional conflicts that have flared in the African nation, as they seek refuge at U.N. facilities, which are acutely short in number.

Japan's Self-Defense Forces are taking part in the U.N. Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), whose main task is to protect civilian lives.

The U.N. Security Council has decided to send thousands of additional soldiers to reinforce the mission.

However, challenges remain for their swift deployment, as well as increasing the accommodation capacity for refugees.

"It's very clear to us that we must not only protect civilians in our compounds and in our camps, we must also be able to protect them out there where they are at risk," Hilde Johnson, special representative of the U.N. secretary general and head of the UNMISS, at a press conference in Juba on Wednesday, reiterating that primary mission of UNMISS is to protect civilians.

The violence that started in Juba on Dec. 15 has since spread east and north, prompting residents to flee for safety to U.N. facilities across the nation. At one point there were as many as 75,000 refugees at such facilities.

At a UNMISS facility near the airport in Juba, a throng of refugees holding their belongings passed through a 3-meter-high steel gate. Guards searched their belongings and bodies for weapons.

Amid sweltering temperatures that have risen to nearly 50 C in Juba, refugees were huddled in the shade of trees, warehouses and heavy machinery. Food, water and toilets were scarce at the facility, and refugees had to clean themselves and do laundry in a dirty stream.

"If we leave, we'll be killed," said a 20-year-old man who was attacked by enemy tribal forces. "We have nowhere else to go."

U.N. boosts response

On Dec. 23, U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki Moon urged the Security Council to reinforce the mission by sending about 6,000 troops and police, as well as six helicopters, including combat helicopters. The Security Council unanimously and swiftly approved the request the following day.

"I'm determined to ensure that UNMISS has the means to carry out its central task of protecting civilians," Ban said at a press conference on Dec. 23 before making the request to the Security Council.

However, the request did not address the issue of shelters for refugees. Tapiwa Gomo, head of communications at U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, said U.N. facilities in the country were originally set up for peacekeepers, not refugees.

Also, the deployment of additional troops has yet to begin. As of Saturday, only 230 police personnel had arrived from other U.N. missions operating in Africa since the Security Council endorsed Ban's recommendations.

While there are more than 100,000 people estimated to be taking shelter in non-U.N. facilities, Johnson said UNMISS was too overstretched to send personnel to patrol such shelters.

Violence in the country since last month is feared to have killed thousands of people.

National interests

Last month, South Korean peacekeepers in Bor in Jonglei State, eastern South Sudan, made a request for ammunition to Ground Self-Defense Force troops after being surrounded by hostile forces. South Korean troops that had accepted about 15,000 refugees at their camps were at risk of running short of ammunition in the event of a conflict.

GSDF troops provided 10,000 rounds of ammunition for free to South Korean troops on Dec. 23.

The Japanese government issued a statement in the name of Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga that said: "South Sudan is in an emergency situation that requires prompt assistance to protect the lives of the South Korean peacekeepers and evacuees."

The United Nations and countries deploying peacekeepers to the nation have been quick to address the issue of protecting civilians in South Sudan.

"[Ban and the U.N. Security Council] were determined to prevent a massacre similar to what happened in Rwanda [in 1994 while a U.N. peacekeeping mission was in operation]," a U.N. diplomatic source said.

The United Nations is currently carrying out discussions to make the international community responsible for protecting civilians when warring countries are unable to do so, to prevent genocide and war or humanitarian crimes.

However, major Western nations have not provided large numbers of troops to U.N. peacekeeping operations. For African missions, in particular, developing nations are the main contributors of troops. As a general rule, multinational forces from the United States and major European nations are mobilized only for conflicts in which national interests are at stake.

### **Phone Companies Restore Scratch Cards' Supply (Gurtong)**

State residents especially in Torit have rushed to restore happiness as they expressed contentment to the sector dealers and urged them to continue with uninterrupted supplies to avoid scarcity of the cards. Customers have been spotted by Gurtong buying scratch cards for Zain, MTN, Vivacell and Gemtel urging their government to improve the security situation and ensure normalization of supplies from Juba to all the states and equally continue to beef up security with an aim to stabilize safety in the entire country. Prior to this, Mobile scratch cards shortage badly hit the entire Eastern Equatoria, with communication being abruptly stalled as mobile phone communication companies were hindered from supplying the commodities as the entire region had a shortage of scratch cards affecting business transactions.

The move comes after violence erupted in Juba a fortnight ago and later spread to Jonglei, Unity and Upper Nile states respectively.

Officials in Eastern Equatoria state noted that the recent strife forced parts of the country to face shortages of scratch cards due to the hindrances of supplies caused by the violence in the country. Nearly the whole two weeks went without sales of scratch cards which noticeably began to run out and respective prices being sharply increased despite Eastern Equatoria state having remained calm.

### **South Sudan security seek to arrest MP Kong Dak (Radio Tamazuj)**

National security agents in Juba have searched the home of a member of parliament and seized assets from his possession, but they did not capture him.

One pick-up truck bearing the agents arrived in the early morning hours Sunday at 1:30 a.m. at the home of MP Kong Dak Jishlive, who lived on a government compound near UNDP in Juba.

According to a witness, this is the third time that security officers visited the compound, which is also shared by Kong's brother, a senior official in petroleum security.

The security forces have ransacked the house, seized computers and other assets, and took three vehicles used by the MP, the witness told Radio Tamazuj.

Dak, a member of parliament representing Leer in Unity State, has sought protection from the United Nations. He was reportedly a close associate of the ousted vice president Riek Machar, whose whereabouts are unknown.

Some sources in Juba also suggest that a few of the recent shooting incidents Saturday and Sunday evenings involved bodyguards of senior politicians or commanders from the same tribe, including the shooting incidents in the Tong Ping neighborhood near UNMISS. Information about the events is still emerging.

Several members of the national security service were wounded or killed in the Jebel area on Saturday night.

### **SPLA Brigadier Defects With Troops As Calm Is Restored In Yei (Gurtong)**

Oba Cecilia Tito, the Mayor of Yei Municipality confirmed to the press in Yei that Brigadier Peter Taab defected with a platoon on the night of 4 January 2014 at around 10pm where Peter Taab's forces started firing bullets into the air to pave way as they moved.

The defectors are said to be heading towards Mukaya Payam in Lainya County with an aim of joining their colleagues who defected in Mundri County in Western Equatoria State.

Oba said two soldiers and one young girl sustained gunshot wounds through crossfire as people started running in different directions, adding that the girl and one injured soldier are currently receiving treatment at Yei Civil Hospital and Yei Medical Centre respectively but the other soldier is missing and could have sustained a minor injury which does need medical attention.

The mayor assured the residents that security is under control and urged all the citizens to go back to their homes as the deserters have already fled the county.

She called upon the organized forces to report back to their various units and only those authorized on official duty and the joint operation forces will be allowed to patrol the town, and those unauthorized soldiers who rushed to save the security situation in the town are asked to return their military hardware in the stores so as not to create more fear among the civilians in the town.

Oba urged all the community leaders, chiefs and the organized forces to stay away from the spirit of revenge and to see that no resident in Yei town is intimidated or harassed.

All religious leaders are also reminded to continue preaching the messages of peace, unity and reconciliation among the leaders and the citizens of the war ravaged country, so that the hearts of the two parties may be driven towards peace restoration.

The Business communities are also being urged to reopen their shops and food stores so as to feed the population as the Municipal also availed the residents with the telephones contacts of all the leaders of the organized forces on duty for easy coordination in case of any unfamiliar movement in the residential areas.

Movement along Yei-Juba road is also temporarily suspended due to the presence of the defected forces roaming on that geographical location but Yei- Kaya port is open for travelers to use from morning up to 5pm.

Although calm is restored in Yei Town, many residents are still full of fear of what would happen; recalling the bad moments in Juba and Bor and this has made some residents to leave for their villages.

Speaking to the press in Juba on Sunday, SPLA spokesman Col. Philip Aguer confirmed to the country the defection of army platoons in Morobo, Yei and Mundri Counties.

A Platoon is comprised of about 30 soldiers, said Aguer.

Aguer told reporters that severe clashes are still going on between the government forces and forces loyal to Dr. Riek Machar in Bor, Unity state and also the SPLA are advancing toward Bentui town.

According to the presidential Spokesperson Ateny Wek Ateny, peace talks between the Government and Rebel delegation in Ethiopia capital Addis Ababa started Sunday but the table is full of conditions from the rebel delegation which is seen to most likely affect the peace negotiation, as the president said he "cannot accept peace with preconditions".

## **REGIONAL**

### **Sudan: Darfur Cannot Absorb Influx of South Sudanese Refugees - Sese (Hilversum)**

Dr Tijani Sese, head of the Darfur Regional Authority (DRA), has called on the Sudanese rebel movements not to side with any party in the South Sudan conflict, but to rather side with the voice of the people of Darfur and join the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD).

He expressed the hope that the current conflict in South Sudan does not lead to an influx of refugees to Darfur. "The poor capabilities of the states of Darfur and the authorities cannot endure any displacement in large numbers", he said in a press statement on Thursday in El Fasher during the Sudanese Islamic Movement forum.

Sese also said that the Darfur Regional Authority commission and the committee formed by the Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM) have begun implementing security arrangements. "They have prepared a vision to start with the security arrangements. This is an important issue as this year, we would like to begin a transformation to a political party", he added.

#### **Voluntary return:**

The head of the DRA explained that the refugee voluntary return projects are still in progress and will be implemented in the next three months. "Especially the five villages in Qatar which will be completed during the three or four months ahead."

He stressed that the displaced people and refugees will return to the locations before the rainy season. A training course of community police will be coordinated with the Minister of Interior. "Sons of displaced people will be incorporated in the Central Reserve Forces, to secure those areas the refugees will return to and to reassure them."

### **Uganda: BoU Fears South Sudan War Could Hurt Uganda's Economy (The Observer)**

Uganda's economy could slow down if the political turmoil in South Sudan continues, Bank of Uganda (BoU) has warned.

Dr Adam Mugume, the executive director Research at BoU, said on Friday that the conflict was likely to reduce the exportation of Ugandan food and construction materials to South Sudan.

"When there is a conflict, people will not build and they will not demand for food. This is likely to reduce on the in-flows [to Uganda]," Mugume said during the release of THthe monthly monetary policy statement at BOU.

The Democratic Republic of Congo, which remains volatile as a result of fighting there too, and South Sudan are among the major trading partners for Uganda, Mugume said.

"For now, we are not sure of what is likely to happen in [South] Sudan and DRC," he said.

The conflict in South Sudan started in mid-December, after President Salva Kiir accused his former deputy, Riek Machar, of attempting a coup. It has since morphed into what is looking like a full-scale civil war, complete with peace talks in another country - Ethiopia. Many Ugandans who dominate the informal trade in the capital Juba have suffered heavy losses and many have returned home.

Mugume said Uganda's exports to South Sudan were valued at \$220m per month. In 2012, Uganda earned an estimated \$1.3bn from exports to South Sudan, according to figures from BoU. The figure is an improvement from the \$630m Uganda earned in 2010.

Meanwhile, inflation continued to drop in December. Core inflation, which measures the changes in prices of goods and services minus utilities, dropped from seven per cent in November to 5.7 per cent. With inflation declining, BoU kept the central bank rate at 11.5 per cent for the second month running.

"BoU forecasts suggest that inflation will edge down further in the near term driven by improved food crop harvests but rise to 6.5 and 7.5 per cent during the latter part of 2014," said Governor Tumusiime Mutebile, while presenting the policy statement.

Not so much is expected to change in terms of the private sector credit growth. Mugume said very few people were applying for loans. Banks have also recorded an increase in their non-performing loans; they are now cautious on who they lend to. Interest rates have remained high - averaging 22 per cent.

The key monetary rate is likely to impact on the foreign exchange market, where for the last week, the shilling slightly depreciated against the dollar due to increased demand for imports.

But foreign investors looking to place funds in Uganda's securities market will look to the yields on instruments like the treasury bills and treasury bonds, which remain lucrative as a result of the unchanged Central Bank Rate. BoU expects the economy to grow between 6.2 and 6.5 per cent this year.

Mugume says if the situation in South Sudan and the DRC is not resolved quickly, the economy's growth could be affected by about 0.5 per cent. Growth in the first quarter of the financial year 2013/14, however, declined compared to the previous quarter.

BoU says the economy is likely to pick up in the remaining part of 2013/14, driven by the recovery in agriculture production and public investment in infrastructure

### **Sudan Ready To Assist South Sudan In Communication Sector, Says Minister (Malaysia News Agency)**

Sudan's Minister of Science and Communication, Dr Tahani Abdalla Attiya, has affirmed Khartoum's full readiness to provide assistance to South Sudan for the establishment of its communication and mail services infrastructure, while expressing her hope that peace and stability will prevail in the two countries.

Speaking during her meeting here Sunday with the Under-secretary of the Ministry of Communication and Mail Services of South Sudan, Gumaa Steven, she gave directives to the concerned administrations at her ministry to provide all the necessary facilities to South Sudan and to finalise the formulation of joint memoranda. The memoranda are due to be signed between the two countries in the field of communication, in a follow-up to the understandings recently reached between her and South Sudan's Minister of Communication, Rebecca Garang.

Meanwhile, Steven expressed South Sudan's appreciation for the cooperation and understanding of the concerned authorities in Sudan on the importance of establishing the communication and mail services infrastructure in South Sudan.

Also present at the meeting were the Under-secretary of Sudan's Ministry of Communication, Prof Zuhair Al-Abjar, and the Director-General of the National Communication Corporation, Dr. Izz-Eddin Kamel.

### **Ugandan Generals, US, Israel Draw S. Sudan War Plan (Chimp Reports)**

President Yoweri Museveni has received a green light from Pentagon in United States to put Uganda infantry and heavy artillery units on standby for a fully-fledged military onslaught on the advancing rebels loyal to fugitive South Sudan Vice President, Riek Machar.

A highly placed security official, who is conversant with military plans of securing Juba, told Chimpreports on Sunday morning that Machar's rebels intend to start the march to Juba on Sunday.

The move has pushed the region over the edge, with Uganda's top military brass drawing a war plan with US military advisors, Israel and Ethiopian Generals.

"We gave Machar a chance to talk to Kiir (Salva) but it appears his agenda is to overthrow the government. He must be dreaming. Should we feel that Juba is threatened, a joint force supported by US marines will swing into action to pursue Machar and his men," warned the official, who preferred anonymity so as to speak freely.

He did not explain whether United States would put its boots on the ground, but Washington's determination to support the fragile state from being plunged into a civil war, would see its army support the joint force with intelligence and air power. Some of the Ugandan army officials involved in the drafting of the South Sudan war plan include CDF Gen Katumba Wamala, Special Forces Commander, Brig Muhoozi Kainerugaba, Gen Salim Saleh, Gen Kale Kayihura, Brig Charles Bakahumura, Gen Aronda Nyakairima and Maj Gen Rusoke.

### UN Support

Britain's Foreign Secretary, William Hague was recently quoted as saying: "I called Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni over S. Sudan because I believe Uganda's constructive role is very vital."

Through the United Nations, the United States has rolled out over \$48m to support Aid agencies which have already drawn up a plan for January, February and March to provide protection, water, food, shelter and healthcare for people most affected by ongoing crisis in South Sudan.

According to high level information, Uganda will use some of its best guerilla-trained and battle-hardened Special Forces crack units to bring Machar to order.

The Ethiopian army, which is also considered one of the finest in Africa, will reinforce the UPDF with warplanes. And to provide more protection to the government of President Kiir in Juba, the United Nations is reinforcing its military personnel in the war-torn country.

"Fighting Machar's rebels will be an easy job because of unwavering support from the International Community," the source added, saying some of the best fighters in the Uganda army had already been positioned in Juba and on the border with South Sudan.

The United Nations peacekeeping mission in Sudan admitted the situation was "fluid," confirming that it is sending reinforcements to areas affected by the current fighting between pro- and anti-Government troops, particularly Bor, Malakal, Bentiu and Juba.

"This is critical to enable the Mission to deliver on its mandate to protect civilians," UNMISS said in a statement on Saturday evening.

It specified that thousands of additional police, military, logistics support and selected civilian staff are being relocated to the affected areas, per the Security Council's authorization.

Three weeks of violence in the world's newest country have claimed thousands of lives and forced about 200,000 people from their homes, many seeking refuge inside UN bases.

UNMISS said that two stand-by police components known as Formed Police Units have been deployed to strengthen security and order for civilians on UN compounds.

A medical team from the UN Mission in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI) arrived Friday in Juba to bolster support at the UN Juba bases. Logistical support for air operations is being provided by the UN Mission in the



Democratic Republic of the Congo, MONUSCO. More aircraft are arriving this week to assist with transport of essential supplies to troops and civilians, the Mission confirmed.

They will be followed by additional police from Nepal, and later also troop reinforcements. With all this in place, it is very unlikely that Machar will succeed in toppling Kiir.

President Museveni and Uhuru Kenyatta have repeatedly clarified that they would not allow any force to overthrow President Kiir. The events unfolding in South Sudan evoke memories of the recent war in Eastern Congo, where a combined force of Tanzania, South Africa, Malawi and DRC soldiers fought and defeated the M23 rebels. The international community, through United Nations, was clearly on the side of Kinshasha. It remains unclear whether Machar will attack UN peacekeepers as such would be considered a war crime and see him booked at the International Criminal Court.

## INTERNATIONAL

### **Chinese Foreign Affairs Minister In Ethiopia To Meet Peace Talks Teams (Chimp Reports)**

H.E Wang Yi landed this morning at Bole airport, Addis Ababa and was received by his Ethiopian counterpart, Dr. Tedro Adhanom.

He is on two days visit in the Horn of Africa where he is also expected to meet both sides of the warring parties from S. Sudan currently holding peace talks in the capital Addis Ababa mediated by the host, Ethiopia. China have large investments in the fragile youngest nation mainly in the oil sector which is now significantly affected by the internal war that broke out three weeks back after a bitter disagreement between President Salva Kiir and his former Vice President, Riek Machar. Over 1000 people are reportedly dead according to United Nations which is the only shelter to 280,000 civilians from three most affected states in the oil unstable country nurtured by billions of dollars in aid annually mainly from U.S that supported her break away from the Republic of Sudan. China plays a cardinal role in oil extraction and production in S. Sudan like the oil concession is done by Greater Nile Petroleum Company, a consortium of national oil companies from China, Malaysia, India and South Sudan. Dr. Tedros Adhanom confirmed welcoming Mr. Wang, "just received Mr. Wang Yi at Bole Airport. He is on a two days official visit here". We are closely following the talks.

### **South Sudan criticizes US, UN for alarmism (Radio Tamazuj)**

Evacuations by the United States and United Nations of personnel from embassies and bases in South Sudan are alarmist and unnecessary, says presidential spokesman Ateny Wek.

He has criticized both the US and the UN for heightening unwarranted fears of an attack on Juba. The criticism comes after the US Department of State ordered the departure of 'most' of its remaining personnel in Juba on Friday

The US State Department "warns US citizens against all travel to the Republic of South Sudan and recommends that US citizens currently in South Sudan depart immediately," it said the same day, citing the "deteriorating security situation."

Ateny Wek dismissed the move saying "in fact there is nothing grave in the situation." He argued that the country is a victim of misleading war propaganda.

"What is befalling South Sudan is disinformation. The rebels have turned to a negative media war by trying to portray things that are not for the benefit of the people of South Sudan," he said.

#### **'Not on the brink of collapse'**

The presidential spokesman affirmed that the decision by US and European Union countries to recommend evacuation of their citizens was not a sign of deteriorating security.

“This is the not the first time that the Americans or the other countries ... decide to withdraw their non-essential staff in any country. But it is not automatic that whenever they withdraw their force the country will be on the brink of collapse.”

“There are countries where they have evacuated their cities but those countries did not collapse. So it is another disinformation. Because the United States of America is the super-country, super-nation, and they should not just continue to withdraw their staff when in fact the situation is under control,” he added.

“There will be nothing that will make the Government of South Sudan to collapse,” he said.

### **Misleading reports**

Ateny Wek was particularly concerned about media quoting several sources as saying that troops of Riek Machar were on the way to Juba. He clarified that he did not want to censor any reports on the situation but he wanted the truth reported, calling the report untrue.

“This misleading information was causing panic. His forces never tried moving to Juba. He doesn’t have the capacity,” according to Ateny Wek.

In particular he singled out an UNMISS colonel in Bor who supposedly told the BBC that opposition forces had advanced 35-40 km south of Bor toward Juba.

“I don’t know whether the United Nations has certain people who are assigned to talk on their behalf or anybody within UNMISS can just talk anything they want to say?” he said. “Such things are the ones that are causing panic in the public.”

Reports on the supposed advance of opposition forces on Juba have delayed the deployment of humanitarian workers to Juba and heightened tensions within military units. Not only media are involved in this reporting, however, since there are also direct contacts between rebels and forces at barracks around the country.

Rebel spokesmen twice in the last week passed Radio Tamazuj information that proved to be unverifiable and apparently false: one source stated that SSLA commander Matthew Pul Jang had defected, and another that SPLA deputy chief of staff for administration Malual Ayom Dor was killed in fighting south of Bor.

### **UK sends aid flight to South Sudan as talks try to end weeks of bloodshed (York Shire Post)**

An emergency relief flight carrying life-saving water and sanitation equipment has landed in South Sudan to help prevent a health crisis developing amid the conflict, International Development Secretary Justine Greening announced.

The cargo of water pumps, hoses, water tanks and chemicals which is to be used to provide clean water to thousands of people who have been forced to flee, arrived in Juba, South Sudan’s capital, yesterday morning as high-stakes talks to try and end weeks of bloodshed finally began in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Thousands have been killed in South Sudan and as many as 200,000 forced from their homes by fighting between troops loyal to president Salva Kiir and those backing his sacked deputy Riek Machar.

Representatives of the warring factions are holding more advanced peace talks for the first time since conflict began in the country on December 15.

The talks are focusing on a ceasefire and the release of political prisoners. Gunfire was heard in Juba on Saturday night. US Secretary of State John Kerry said the beginning of direct talks was an important step, but that both sides need to put the interests of South Sudan above their own.

An immediate monitored ceasefire must be the top priority of peace negotiations between South Sudan’s warring factions, according to Africa minister Mark Simmonds. With access needed for humanitarian aid, he described the situation as still being of “grave concern” and urged the parties to show flexibility.

The emergency supplies, provided by Oxfam and funded by the International Development department, is in addition to the £12.5m of emergency assistance from Department For International Development announced in December 2013, to provide funding for clean water, health care and temporary shelter.

The task is to try and stop a secondary health crisis from striking.

Ms Greening said: “We continue to assess the situation on the ground and stand ready to deliver further humanitarian assistance.”

Mr Simmonds described the launch of the formal peace talks as a “constructive step,” adding: “An immediate agreement to a monitored cessation of hostilities must be the priority. It’s important that detainees are released quickly and with due process, to help ensure a successful dialogue. He added: “I hope these talks will help deliver the peace all of South Sudan’s people wish for.

### **Lost Boy who made home in Nebraska dies in South Sudan (Omaha)**

Andrew Bith Abui survived many hardships in his 32 years, including the Sudanese violence that made him one of the Lost Boys more than 20 years ago.

As a child, he endured harsh refugee camps in Ethiopia and Kenya. He made his way to Nebraska, where he worked, studied and sought a better life for himself and others.

Abui was gunned down and killed last week during an extended visit to his wife in South Sudan, relatives and friends said.

“It’s really hard,” said a cousin, Stephen Miajok, who was with Abui in an Ethiopian refugee camp. “I feel a lot of pain.”

That which Abui left behind — the horror of intense civil unrest — ultimately caught up with him anyway. Miajok said members of the Nuer tribe, who are in armed conflict with members of the Dinka tribe in South Sudan, attacked the community where Abui was staying. Abui was killed in the melee.

Daniel Bior of La Vista said he met Abui when both were in a camp in Kenya. They were in Group 44, a large group of boys.

“When I stayed with him, he was just like my brother,” Bior said. When they were given a chance to study, Bior said, Abui performed near the top of the kids.

But living in those camps was difficult. Peter Kuany of Waterloo, who met Abui in the United States, said the Lost Boys lived without parents in refugee camps that sometimes had too little food and water.

Conditions were at times unsanitary. “It was a very bad life,” Kuany said.

South Sudan won independence in 2011 from Sudan. But recent conflict among South Sudanese leaders has sparked friction between Dinkas and Nuers. Fresh hostility, violence and death have followed.

Miajok and others said Abui lived in Plattsmouth, Neb. He had worked over the past few years at a meat-processing plant in Council Bluffs and at a plastics plant in Omaha.

He lived briefly in Florida, studying and working, but came back to the Omaha area and earned a degree at Metropolitan Community College, his friends said. A Metro spokeswoman said Abui graduated with honors in May with a degree in criminal justice.

Abui ran last year for the chairmanship of a large local group that sends books and supplies back to his community in South Sudan, but narrowly lost.

He married a woman in South Sudan and had been visiting her there since late spring. Miajok said his cousin intended to return to the Omaha area.

Abui liked watching boxing and engaged in a bit of that sport as well, Miajok said. He also enjoyed a form of wrestling that is popular in Sudan.

Mainly, Miajok said, Abui hoped to lift others from the kind of tough life that he escaped. He knew what it was like to struggle.

Miajok said: “He was always there for anyone who needed help.”

### **Australia's Mercy Mission To South Sudan (Malaysia News Agency)**

A Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) transport aircraft has landed in South Sudan's new capital Juba laden with supplies for the troubled nation.

The C-17 Globemaster II carried relief supplies including tents and water purification and sanitation equipment packed into three large shipping containers. The supplies will go to UN camps where thousands of people have sought refuge.

While the situation around Juba is stable, US aircraft flying into outlying towns have been fired on and some crew members have been wounded, The Australian newspaper reports. Australia has 20

peacekeepers in South Sudan working in key planning roles in the UN mission as it tries to head off civil war in the fledgling nation.

A second RAAF aircraft, a smaller C-130 Hercules, is expected to carry additional peacekeepers to South Sudan from nearby nations. The C-17 is expected to make about eight trips to Juba.

### **British Aid Flight Lands in South Sudan (Chimp Reports)**

An emergency relief flight carrying life-saving water and sanitation equipment has landed in South Sudan to help prevent a health crisis developing amidst the conflict, UK's International Development Secretary Justine Greening announced Sunday. Funded by the UK's Department for International Development, the flight departed Manston Airport in Kent on Saturday 4 January, and arrived in Juba this morning carrying vital supplies provided by Oxfam. The cargo includes water pumps, hoses, water tanks and chemicals to prevent disease and provide clean water to thousands of people who have fled the conflict.

Announcing the support, Greening said: "With thousands of families fleeing their homes, there is a very real health risk posed by dirty water and poor sanitation.

"Working with Oxfam, this life-saving equipment will help prevent a secondary health crisis emerging.

"We continue to assess the situation on the ground and stand ready to deliver further humanitarian assistance."

As the crisis in South Sudan continues, latest UN figures reveal that 194,000 people have been displaced from their homes and many are in need of food, healthcare, shelter, clean water, sanitation and protection. The turmoil was sparked off by a botched coup against President Salva Kiir's government.

Peace talks spearheaded by IGAD to find negotiated peaceful solution to the current South Sudan violence has today on Friday in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Launching the first stage of the negotiations, Dr. Tedros Adhanom, Ethiopia's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Ambassador Seyoum Mesfin, IGAD's newly appointed Special Envoy to South Sudan held talks with the two negotiating teams separately to discuss the causes and the possible solutions to the south Sudan conflict.

The separate proxy talks would also be used to draw the agenda for the face to face negotiation that is hoped to be conducted after a successful completion of the proxy talks.

This flight is in addition to the £12.5 million of emergency assistance from DFID announced on 31 December 2013, which provided funding for clean water, health care and temporary shelter.

Before the current crisis, South Sudan was already one of the poorest countries in the world with over half of the 8.3 million population living below the poverty line.

DFID's new humanitarian funding is in addition to our ongoing long term development work in South Sudan.

This £60m programme has been targeted at primary education, treatment and prevention from malaria, tackling hunger, supporting security, and providing health care and nutrition.

## **OPINION/ANALYSIS**

### **OPINION: South Sudan Should Learn from Somalia (Scoop Media)**

**By Ahmed Said** - A fierce fighting has erupted in South Sudan. It has been in the news for a while now: but there is one thing the war has already achieved: both sides in the conflict are fighting a losing battle. No one will win it. People are getting displaced and this will create refugee crisis. It will send refugee oxodus to

neighboring countries. And it will be very difficult to help countless numbers of war runaways fleeing from the bloodshed.

War and famine are like twins and it is for sure that the violent mayhem in South Sudan will cause severe famine if not prevented before it is too late. And this will be widespread with a lot of famine victims who will be needing relief during the manmade hunger.

According to news reports, what started as a squabble, between President Salva Kiir and his former vice president Riek Machar, gave birth to a civil war in South Sudan with ethnic overtones. The two men belong to the largest tribes in South Sudan: Kiir hails from Dinka and Machar is Nuer. If you talk to the two men, each of them tells you a different story as to the spark of the war: president Kiir claims after he had sacked him, Mr. Machar tried a failed coup: on the other hand, Machar claims the president engaged in a political endeavor to marginalize him and the rest of the opposition.

As the two sides sent delegations to Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa, for peace talks, so far there is no breakthrough as of today, Sunday. The Eastern African Countries know as IGAD and Western powers including the United States are trying to get the two parties to agree to a ceasefire as the fighting continues. The two parties need to learn from Somalia and stop the fighting immediately.

If the South Sudanese government and the rebels don't stop hostilities now, then peace might become like searching pin in a haystack.

The neighboring countries should avoid from siding with one of the warring parties, at least in the short term. I believe Uganda's recent utterances against the rebels were unfortunate: Uganda's president Museveni said Uganda will take some sort of action against the rebels if the rebels do not agree to a ceasefire, and he said that late December 2013 before the warring parties even sent their delegations to Addis Ababa for peace talks.

However, if the peace talks fails and it becomes so clear for the failure to be blamed on one of the warring parties in South Sudan, then the world taking action against the failure-creating side might be necessary.

The South Sudanese Government and the rebels should really learn a great lesson from Somalia from which I originally hail. As a Somali, I know the pains and the sorrows of a civil war. I know how war sends people to their graves no matter their guilt or innocence. I know war maims people without asking them which limb they prefer. I know war displaces people without giving them a say as to whether they want or not. I know war breaks hearts but never amends what it already destroyed. Please stop the war.

*Ahmed Said is a Somali American Writer based in St. Cloud, Minnesota, United States.*

### **OPINION: Susan Rice's Sudan disaster ( New York Post)**

By Arthur Herman, The world's newest country, South Sudan, is trapped in a bloody civil war as rival political factions fight for control of the country's oil reserves — the third biggest in sub-Saharan Africa. More than a thousand have died, and another 180,000 are refugees from the bloodbath, which, despite UN and US intervention and the opening of peace talks, shows no signs of slowing.

Sadly, this tragedy could have been avoided if the Obama White House had followed a more sensible policy in that strife-torn region. Instead, it's relied on our former ambassador to the UN, new National Security Adviser Susan Rice, who for almost three decades has been a leading architect of this country's policy toward Africa — with disastrous results.

Rice's string of bad calls began when she was a 28-year-old consultant on President Bill Clinton's National Security Council and advised him to take a hands-off approach to the massacres taking place in Rwanda in 1994 and not denounce it as genocide — an act of omission that still stands as Clinton's greatest shame.

Later, as assistant secretary of state, Rice became cozy with

Ethiopia's Stalin-inspired dictator Meles Zenawi, whose war on neighboring Eritrea cost upwards of 100,000 lives (she recently delivered the eulogy at Zenawi's funeral).

In 1998, she tried to end a civil war in Sierra Leone by forcing the government to grant amnesty to the child-murdering thugs of the Revolutionary United Front, or RUF, and make their leader head honcho of the country's diamond trade. Three months later, Sierra Leone exploded as the RUF took 500 UN peacekeepers hostage; British troops had to go in to impose order.

But Sudan has been the centerpiece of Rice's misshaping of America's policy in Africa, and the current mess in South Sudan arises from two fatal errors.

The first is Rice's leftist attraction for anyone who dubs himself a Marxist revolutionary or heads a People's Liberation Army. In this case, it was the Sudan People's Liberation Army with whose leaders Rice developed a close -some say overly close — relationship when she served in the Clinton administration. Even when she was out of office during the George W. Bush years, she lobbied hard for the SPLA's goal of breaking free of the Sudanese government in Khartoum, and gaining independence for South Sudan.

But the sad truth is there's nothing to hold South Sudan's ethnically and religiously divided semi-nomads together except those oil reserves, which represent 98 percent of the country's revenues. Without cash flowing to the new government to ease tensions, it was inevitable that those divisions would flare up into civil war among the SPLA's gun-toting guerrillas.

And here Rice and the Obama team made their second mistake.

As soon as independence was granted in 2011, it was imperative to get Khartoum's cooperation in negotiating borders, water rights and, above all, a lasting agreement on pumping South Sudan's oil through Sudanese territory so it could get to market.

But Team Obama never did. Instead, they've insisted that the Khartoum regime remain a pariah state until Sudan's rulers are punished for their transgressions against the South Sudanese people and the inhabitants of Darfur far to the northeast. The one State Department official who urged a "reset" in relations with Khartoum in order to help South Sudan's transition, Special Envoy Scott Gration, got the boot.

So with the oil issue left unresolved, relations between Sudan and South Sudan have now collapsed. Last June, Sudan's president shut down the oil pipeline, and then in December the rivalry between the SPLA's top two leaders (members of rival ethnic groups, the

Nuer and Dinka) exploded in open warfare. Now the US is stuck with Obama's public commitment to help end the fighting — and with Susan Rice's one-woman experiment in state building.

What's the answer?

First, Washington must reopen communication channels with Khartoum, in order to negotiate a comprehensive settlement that will not only secure South Sudan's future but also point the way to a lasting peace in Darfur.

Second, Susan Rice must leave the administration before she does more harm — not just in South Sudan but in the next items on her agenda as National Security Advisor, Iran, as well as the Israel-Palestinian peace process.

She's led American policy into a series of disasters. South Sudan needs to be the last.

Arthur Herman, a historian, writes frequently on foreign policy for Commentary and The Post.

### **South Sudan: guns and words (The Times/AP)**

The fighting flared as representatives of both sides were due to talk in Addis Ababa about ending the conflict.

Juba was hit by heavy gunfire late on Saturday, with exchanges of automatic and heavy weapons fire heard in the south of the city. Relative calm returned in the early hours of the morning.

There was speculation that yet another army unit had defected to the rebels, though army spokesman Philip Aguer said the government was "investigating exactly what happened".

A police spokesman said the fighting might have been caused by "criminals trying to scare people so they can go into houses and steal".

After a terrifying night sheltering in their homes, more residents could be seen trying to get transport south to Uganda, adding to the nearly 200,000 people already displaced by the three-week-old conflict.

The fighting erupted on December 15, pitting army units loyal to President Salva Kiir against a loose alliance of ethnically based militias and mutinous army commanders nominally headed by Kiir's rival, former vice-president Riek Machar.

Kiir has accused Machar of attempting a coup but Machar denies this and accuses the president of trying to purge his rivals.

Fighting has spread across the world's youngest nation, with the rebels seizing several areas in the oil-rich north.

Fighting was reportedly continuing yesterday in Bor, a rebel-held town north of Juba, and clashes were reported in Yei, to the south.

The conflict has already left thousands dead, according to the UN, and both sides are alleged to have committed atrocities.

US Secretary of State John Kerry said yesterday that peace talks between the warring factions must not be a "gimmick" to gain the upper hand on the ground.

"Both parties must put the interest of South Sudan above their own," Kerry told reporters in Jerusalem. He is back in the Middle East in pursuit of a peace agreement between the Palestinians and Israel.

"Negotiations have to be serious, they cannot be a delay, a gimmick [to win military advantage]," Kerry said

He said the US expected the rival leaders to have the "courage, resolve and clear intent to find a political solution".

Aid workers have stepped up their warnings of a worsening crisis for civilians in the landlocked country of almost 11 million.

### **South Sudan's Tangled Crisis (The New York Times)**

The last time the world's eyes were on South Sudan, it was a time of jubilation. In July 2011, its secession from Sudan after decades of civil war was feted as a triumph of international advocacy. It seemed a long overdue deliverance for the people of the South, who had borne the brunt of successive Sudanese military assaults. South Sudan has always been viewed through the prism of its victimhood at the hands of its former northern neighbor.

Now, two and a half years later, South Sudan is in the news again. It has become clear that the country is not a bucolic land ruled by the freedom fighters. It has its own internal fissures, ethnic tensions and residual wounds of war. But the outside world must not misunderstand the roots of the current outbreak of violence in a rush to come to grips with this new internal conflict.

Although there are plenty of reports indicating that the current crisis has unfolded along tribal lines, this is an extremely simplistic and dangerous way to frame events. The real source of South Sudan's violence is political, not ethnic — and Western policy makers must grasp this reality before it's too late. The international media has been all too ready to frame the violence that erupted after Dec. 15 entirely in terms of ethnic violence and state collapse — a familiar narrative for conflicts in African countries that glosses over the political roots of the conflict.

The Guardian splashed its front page with "South Sudan: The State That Fell Apart in a Week," and the paper's reporting reflected a media narrative that has shifted from the South's victimhood at the hands of the North to one of bipolar tribal conflict between the two dominant tribes in the country, the Dinka, the president's tribe, and the Nuer, his challenger's. On Christmas Eve, London's Sunday Times focused on "Gangs Deal Out Death by Language Test," detailing how gangs chose who to kill based on what language they spoke, and therefore what tribe they were from.

It is "a narrative that confirms all that people thought they knew about Africa — that ancient, intractable tribalism once again brings a country to its knees," writes Peter Greste, Al Jazeera's East Africa correspondent. "It's an analysis that seems to explain everything without actually telling us anything." Reducing conflict to tribalism is particularly hazardous when applied to South Sudan. It is a country where foreign stakeholders have significant influence, and any push toward a tribally defined solution to the conflict — like a Bosnia-style ethnic power sharing deal — would be disastrous, for it would entrench and validate ethnic fissures, rather than give political power sharing a chance to smooth them over.

This is not the first time that simplistic Western narratives about war in Sudan have prevented viable political solutions. The Darfur conflict was sold by activists and the media as genocide perpetrated by an ethnically domineering Arab majority — a crude and ultimately harmful view that isolated and entrenched the government in the North while eliminating the possibility of international mediation.

Advocacy by celebrities like Mia Farrow, George Clooney and Don Cheadle aided the secession cause in South Sudan. Only one possible scenario was ever presented: South Sudan would vote in a referendum and secede immediately after a yes vote. There was no grace period, no foster parenting by the United Nations and no time for political parties and infrastructure to mature.

Over the past two weeks there have been eyewitness reports of horrific murders based on racial profiling in several towns, including Juba and Bor. But this alarming ethnic violence is just one strand of a bundle of grievances, and it is by no means without precedent. In countries where nation building remains embryonic and a national identity still fragile, tribe and ethnicity gain more importance. When the chips are down, one's loyalty tends to default to one's group. A genocidal meltdown could occur in South Sudan, but it isn't inevitable.

After all, the conflict was not precipitated by ethnic grievances, nor is it being fanned by explicit tribal rhetoric on behalf of political leaders. The ethnic element is a symptom, rather than a source, of the problem. As Andreas Hirblinger and Sara de Simone explained in a recent article, no protagonist has "openly played the 'ethnic card.'" Indeed, the outbreak of violence is closely linked to the political standoff between President Salva Kiir and other leading members of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement, including former members of the government, who accused Mr. Kiir of "dictatorial tendencies." It is essentially a rebellion against the concentration of power.

This matters because South Sudan is a country that was midwived by powerful and committed lobbies in the United States and Europe; its birth was not only a triumph for the South Sudanese, but of Western advocacy. A mere nine days after the first hostilities started, the United Nations Security Council voted on a resolution to send 5,500 additional peacekeepers to South Sudan, boosting its force to 12,500. On Saturday, international and regional pressure also brought Mr. Kiir and his main rival, former Vice President Riek Machar, to the negotiating table in Addis Ababa.

South Sudan is a country where Western perceptions hold sway, and Western aid and power can engineer political deals. A misreading of the crisis could result in resolutions that effectively hand out pieces of the cake tribe by tribe, aggravating and endorsing ethnic fissures, rather than helping to eradicate them.

*Nesrine Malik is a Sudanese journalist.*

### **African Union missing in action in conflicts from Mali to South Sudan (The Guardian)**

The retired French general Vincent Desportes told the BBC World Service last week that France should back political change in Mali and remain in the country as long as necessary.

In the Central African Republic (CAR), the current deployment of 1,600 French troops is insufficient: at least 5,000 are needed, Desportes said. No one batted an eyelid. Yet a decade ago, such statements would have been denounced as outrageous imperialist ambition to re-colonise Africa. So what has changed?

From Mali to Somalia, the continent has been convulsed by an arc of conflict. Consider the most recent wars, in CAR and South Sudan. Médecins Sans Frontières, the normally unflappable aid agency, described the violence in CAR as out of control. Half the citizens of Bangui have fled the town and, across the country, about 785,000 people are displaced. The situation in South Sudan is little better: the UN says more than 194,000 people have fled their homes and that 107,000 seek shelter around UN bases.

In all this bloodshed the African Union (AU) is nowhere to be seen. It was French troops that were airlifted into CAR to save the day – just as they did in Mali, Niger and Ivory Coast. UN peacekeepers are being rushed from Darfur, Liberia, Ivory Coast, and even Haiti, to try to staunch the fighting in South Sudan. The US deployed marines from their base in Djibouti to Uganda and Juba, the South Sudanese capital, to assist in the evacuation of Americans.

The much-vaunted African Standby Force, with its regional Standby Brigades at the beck and call of the AU has failed to materialise. The idea of a military force answerable to African leaders has its origins in the Rwandan genocide of 1994. Horrified as they looked on helplessly, this bred a determination to intervene in future conflicts.



The problem was discussed in Harare, Zimbabwe, in 1997 by African chiefs of defence staff, but the initiative had to wait until July 2002 before it receive a formal go-ahead. African leaders planned to have five regional forces by 2010 to bring security to their troubled continent.

The Standby Brigades would answer to the AU's peace and security council, the continental equivalent of the UN security council. The aim was to produce a rapidly deployable force and that by 2012 two units, each 2,500 strong, could be operational within just 14 days.

This was highly ambitious but badly needed. When, in 2002, the AU replaced the OAU, its badly discredited predecessor, it was specifically mandated to prevent a repetition of the Rwandan genocide. The AU's constitution allows it to intervene in a member state to halt what is described as "grave circumstances, namely war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity."

The Standby Brigades gave teeth to this intention and won considerable western support. The US poured money into the initiative, providing \$500m to train up to 50,000 African troops. British involvement was also substantial, with more than £110m a year being invested via the African Conflict Prevention Pool for nearly a decade.

Today the figure stands at £51.5m. The pool is a joint initiative, run by the Foreign Office, the Ministry of Defence and the Department for International Development. Little hard information has been provided about its programmes, which were criticised by an independent review.

In reality the Standby Brigades have not got off the ground. Differences between African states run far too deep for them to be used in the continent's many crises. Many of the troops are insufficiently trained, armed or disciplined to be deployed effectively. In November 2013 an official statement from the South African government took the route of least resistance: it announced that the force would be renamed.

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