



United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)

Media & Spokesperson Unit
Communications & Public Information Office

MEDIA MONITORING REPORT

THURSDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER 2013

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Highlights

Abyei to reject any joint administration with Khartoum

The Citizen Newspaper Juba, 26/9/2013 – Edward Lino Wour Abyei, the Co-chair of Abyei Joint Oversight Committee (AJOC) said the people of Abyei will not accept any such plans if fronted. “The people of Abyei Region have rejected any plans to have a joint administration in the area with the government of Sudan because of they have stolen enough oil to develop their country from us,” he added

“Secondly sharing with them is like contacting a virus because of their change of mind anytime. The Abyei community will manage their own affairs alone,” said Lino.

His statement came as the scheduled time frame for the Abyei referendum of October draws near with the area people from parts of South Sudan and around the world travelling in big numbers for the plebiscite.

“We know that Sudan is not supporting the Abyei referendum but that does not stop us from conducting our elections as stipulated in the cooperation agreement signed between South Sudan and Sudan,” Lino added.

He called on the African Union (AU) to fix the exact date of the voting so that the exercise goes on as planned.

Lino said that there are some organizations on the ground in line with the plebiscite that are not supporting it and warned that they should leave since they are not supporting what they are mandated to carry out.

He also said there will be a conference soon concerning these organizations and especially as he put it “to dialogue the failure of the key players for the Abyei Referendum.”

“People who are in support of Khartoum should leave the area because they are not going to be part of the exercise in October,” Lino said.

Concerning the latest events in Juba between the ministers of Interior of the two countries for the agreement on bilateral trade between Sudan and South Sudan with free movement of goods and people across their borders, Lino said it will not yield proper fruit because the north can change its mind at any time. ([Back to Top](#))

Katebo tribesmen seek ethnic recognition

Gurtong.net Torit, 25/9/2013 – Ketebo, one of the ethnic community in Eastern Equatoria State’s Ikwoto County, is petitioning the State Legislative Assembly on what it terms as ‘attempts to exclude’ them from the list of ethnic communities.

“We are writing through esteemed office; the August House of EES, presenting a petition on attempts to exclude Ketebo from the list of Nationalities or ethnic Communities in EES. We shall be grateful if our rights are defended and granted by our beloved State Legislative Assembly. May God bless your efforts,” petition dated 24th September 2013 reads in part.

The community leaders say that the State Legislative Assembly is the mouthpiece of the people regardless of their ethnicities and or areas they come from and they want support against “attempts to deny the Ketebo its rightful existence as one of the ethnic communities in the state.”

The head Chief of Losite Payam Alex Lojana Kwatir who is actually from the affected tribe together with Ketebo Youth Chairperson, Mr. Martin Napali Lofane confirmed they were presenting the petition to the Eastern Equatoria State Legislative Assembly Speaker, Emmanuel Ambrose Ocholimoi.

The letter argues that indeed, Ketebo as one of ethnic communities; exists in Ikwoto, EES and it occupies four Bomas such as Napeiyase, Namarati, Nakoringole and Madiel within Losite Payam.

The county, according to the petition, is inhabited by seven ethnic groups with distinct languages and cultures being spoken and practiced respectively with ethnic origins.

“Ethnicities and nationalities are some of the few things we can’t create or manufacture. To be born to a family in an ethnic is not a choice, but God given. Nevertheless, many members of our community seeking to acquire the South Sudan National Identity Cards (IDs), have been asked to choose a tribe from a list of existing ethnic groups (gotten) from the internet, which does not include Ketebo, thus the authorities ask them to choose a new and different identity,” the petition reads.

“This is against both transitional constitutions; state and national of 2011, quote; Part two, Bills of rights, Article 33 on ‘Rights of Ethnic and cultural communities....’ Part one, Chapter 1, Article 6(1) on ‘Rights of the indigenous languages of the state,” they said.

The Ketebo Community in its letter asking the State Legislative Assembly to come with an official list of all nationalities of EES to be used by the National ID office in Torit to avoid interference by some individuals.

The letters appeals to the State Legislative Assembly that a Parliamentary Committee be formed to investigate reasons that led to exclusion of Ketebo from the list of ethnic groups.

However, the petition defends and clarifies that the state Governor Louis Lobong Lojore clearly recognizes as he mentioned in his speeches Ketebo alongside other ethnic groups during 9 July 2013 celebrations of the independence of South Sudan held at two venues; St. Peter and Paul’s Catholic Cathedral and Torit Freedom Square respectively.

Among the signatories of the petition are the former State Deputy Speaker, Hon. Martin Odwar Lonuha, the Losite Payam head Chief Alex Lojana Kwatir, the Ketebo Youth Chairperson, Mr. Martin Napali Lofane, the state SPLM Women League Chairperson’s Bibiana Candido Wako, Namarati Boma Chief’s Marko Polo and the elderly Ketebo’s Ignasio Lokurum.

According community leaders, the State Legislative Assembly Speaker will further table the petition before Assembly Business Committee thereafter discussion and consideration will be presented to the State Legislative Assembly for debate and consequent considerations on appropriate resolution.

The House of Nationalities is built on the premise that the cultural diversity of the South Sudanese is their biggest wealth.

Languages and cultures are the bricks of any national identity, and their respect forms the foundation of sustainable peace and development.

Diversity, however, is a fragile good; it needs care and protection against political manipulation.

The House of Nationalities is providing both. It aims at protecting the identity of all ethnic communities (nationalities) living in the South Sudan.

The concept of the House of Nationalities has grown out of the painful experience of 50 years of civil war in the Sudan. ([Back to Top](#))

Kiir urges lakes residents to avoid inter-communal conflicts

Gurtong.net Rumbek, 25/9/2013 – President Salva Kiir Mayardit on Wednesday arrived in Lakes State for a two-day visit where he addressed a public rally attended by thousands at the Rumbek Freedom Square, urging the inhabitants to avoid inter-communal conflicts.

Kiir explained that the people of Lakes state had complained that he undermined their state but the chance for him to visit was limited due to office related matters and other engagements.

“I did not undermine the state – late [SPLM] chairman Dr. John Garang De Mabior handed over the power here in Rumbek Freedom Square in 2005 before his death,” he said.

Kiir said that the SPLM party members will be expelled if they cannot abide with the party policy and those not satisfied with the party vision can set up their parties.

The president’s visit will take two days in Rumbek.

Today, president Kiir will meet all SPLM Caucus members at the Lakes State Legislative Assembly, including SPLM party secretariat officials to discuss party issues.

The President is also expected to meet with the Governor, the State government lawmakers and local leaders to get a brief on security and other issues in the state. ([Back to Top](#))

Jonglei state security has normalized: Acting Governor

Gurtong.net Bor, 25/9/2013 – Jonglei State Acting Governor has said that the security situation has normalized in September compared to other months where a number of incidences were recorded in areas of Pibor County.

Speaking to Gurtong, Gabriel Gai Riem said that security situation in the state is calm, though they are still experiencing few isolated cases of insecurity in the counties that are related to social problems in the state.

He said that security situation in September is better than it was in July and August where they experienced some incidences in Pibor and also some cattle raids in Twic East and Akobo counties.

Meanwhile, Riam said that in the last few days they experienced child abduction where two children were abducted and one person was killed and a woman wounded.

He said that both killing and children abduction are issues that need security in the country especially Jonglei state in particular.

He said that some of the raiders attempted to raid 70 heads of cattle in Akobo west but youth intervened and recovered the cattle.

Meanwhile, the Bishop of Bor Diocese, Rev. Ruben Akurdit de Ngong has called upon the communities of Jonglei state to work for peace and stability as the duty of everybody citizen is to create peace in the nation.

Speaking to public on Saturday, Bishop stated that they have acknowledged the effort being given to them by partners in supporting the state government and its communities such that peace prevails in the state.

He has said that his ministry of God has been praying for peace although it needs support from everybody in the entire state to pray as well.

“For all these long, the state has been in the headlines all the times about the incidences of the circle violence among the tribes in the state,” he said. ([Back to Top](#))

IMF says South Sudan economy improving

Catholic Radio Network, 26/9/2013 – International Monetary Fund or IMF said South Sudan's economic outlook was improving.

In a statement on Wednesday after consultation on rapid credit facility IMF said oil production was rising and inflation declining.

The mission welcomed the 2013/2014 budget which strikes the right balance between increasing spending on priority areas and maintaining economic stability.

The mission encouraged plans to lift fiscal austerity gradually as the oil revenue becomes more certain to move forward with key reforms including the enactment of the Petroleum Revenue Management Act.

IMF stressed the need for careful and transparent management of South Sudan's abundant natural resources and investments in health, education, public infrastructure and poverty reduction.

Discussions on possible IMF Rapid Credit Facility financial support and a government program are advancing and could be concluded soon.

IMF close to aid deal for South Sudan

Agence France Presse (AFP) Washington, 25/9/2013 – The International Monetary Fund said Wednesday it was close to reaching an agreement to provide financial support to the government of South Sudan.

The IMF said discussions on support under its Rapid Credit Facility, which helps finance governments facing immediate balance of payments problems, "are at an advanced stage and could be concluded in coming days."

The IMF gave no size for the proposed RCF loan, but said that if it is implemented successfully, it would set the basis for stabilizing the young country's economy and help it attract support from other lenders and from private investors.

The IMF said in a mission report released Wednesday that the country's economic outlook is improving, with oil production on the rise and inflation falling.

It praised the government's newest budget proposal, for fiscal 2013-2014, as striking a good balance between increasing spending on priority areas and maintaining economic stability.

"The mission also welcomes the authorities' plans to lift fiscal austerity gradually as the oil revenue stream becomes more certain and to move forward with other key reforms including the enactment of the Petroleum Revenue Management Act," it said.

The IMF team stressed the need for "sound" fiscal and foreign exchange policies, more transparency in government and in oil operations, and better management of public spending.
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Pigi South MP predicts hunger outbreak

Gurtong.net Bor, 25/9/2013 – Pigi South Constituency Member of Parliament, Mathew Matiok Lem, has said that the poor harvest this year will result into hunger outbreak as rains delayed cultivation.

Lam said that people in his county will be in bad situation next year as the rainfall in some parts of his county started from late in July in other parts while it started early in other parts of the county .

He said told Gurtong that for those whose rain started earlier have cultivated well meanwhile in some parts, the rain destroyed all the crops especially in Korfullus payam and part of Pigi, Cannal, Wunlith and Mareng are mostly affected by heavy rains and floods.

Lem said that all the local people in the area depend on cultivation only because there is no other source of food.

"There is no optional ways of life accept through cultivation. All people are not working, only few people not more than 5% of the population have work in the county, the rest of the population are farmers, they have no option for another way of life and the only way for them is through cultivation," he said.

He urges the international agencies and nongovernmental organizations to help the community in delivering the relief assistance to the affected areas in Pigi this year.

He said that few traders who are in the county have no money for them to transport goods in bulk to the county.

Matiok appeals to both the state and the national Government to build a road connecting Bor headquarters to Malakal to help communities settling along Jonglei-Upper Nile route to ease transportation of goods to the counties.

He says before the rainy season, they use to come and take goods from the state capital through Ayod to Pigi but during the rains, they cannot manage except from Upper Nile if there are goods in Malakal.

"Now the life is very difficult because of the rain, there is no access on the roads except through the river," he said.

Meanwhile, Jonglei State Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry has predicted that the state will face hunger in 2014 due to the heavy floods which have affected all the eleven counties this year.

Mayen Ngor Atem, the state Minister of Agriculture and Forestry says floods have devastated some of the counties adding that there will be a hunger in 2014.

Mayen says because of the late rain and of heavy downpour this year, from the high land of Ethiopia and from parts of Eastern Equatoria that bring in huge amount of water.

He said that flashback of river Nile and Sobat affected all the counties that are around the river banks.

He said it has caused destruction and affected the livestock and livelihood of the people, destroying the crops, houses and displacing thousands of people. ([Back to Top](#))

Jonglei women accuse men of ‘failure’ in family affairs

Gurtong.net Bor, 25/9/2013 – Jonglei women have raised concerns over what they say is ‘failure’ by men in contribution to family affairs.

The women say that majority of the youth in Bor spend their day time in playing dominoes and cards.

Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare official Abuk Gabriel Aluong has said that the role of the women in the family is more than what they men do in the society.

“Went you look at the roles, women are the most suffering people at home meanwhile men just played games starting from the morning till evening hours, they don’t have work to do at home,” Abuk Gabriel said.

Abuk accused the men saying that when they come back at their respective home’s, they directly ask for food, adding that if there is no food they in turn beat the woman and take them to jail because there is no food.

Abuk who spoke to the media said that she doesn’t know well on how she may be able to term the men who are not role models in their families as people share duties in other societies.

She said in Jonglei state society the men do not understand the family roles as for everybody including the man.

Elizabeth Yar Ayieth who has small business in Marol Market told Gurtong that her shop is the only source of survival in the family because her husband is jobless and cannot afford to work for the sake of the family.

Yar said her husband is addicted to alcohol as he leaves them in the morning and comes back home at night while drunk.

Speaking to Gurtong on Monday, James Ghai said that majority of youth have joined playing cards because they are jobless.

“Playing cards is the only source that youth can interact in the town, you have no were to work so what will they do, are they going to steal in the market or they may play so that they are well engaged. Any person who has got a job doesn’t play from here,” he said.

Meanwhile, the former Governor of Jonglei state, Kuol Manyang Juuk, told the youth to abandon playing games and join agriculture and private sectors so that they may be productive and give support to their families.

Kuol banned youth from playing dominoes and other types of games that gathered majority of people in the town. ([Back to Top](#))

Snake kills woman, child Tonj South

Don Bosco Radio, 25/9/2013 – Snake on Monday killed a pregnant woman and a boy in Malual-Mock Boma in Tonj South County of Warrap State.

Commissioner William Wol said the snake bit the woman and the boy in the flood water, Don Bosco Radio reported.

He explained that the woman was running with children in the flood watwr while the boy was taking goats and felt into deep water.

The Commissioner urged the state government, international and national NGOs to urgently rescue the worsening situation of flood affected people.

One of the victims Anger Majok said the flood destroyed their farms leaving them without food.

She complained that they are dying of flood effects and snakes bites.

Ms Majok urged the state government and NGOs to help them with food, medicines, mosquito nets and shelters. ([Back to Top](#))

Civil servants directed to obtain nationality documents

Gurtong.net Torit, 25/9/2013 – The Eastern Equatoria state government has announced through Ministry of Labour that all its civil servants must obtain National Identity Cards, birth certificates or certificates of assessment of ages and Passports.

The State Labour, Public Service and Human Resources Development Minister Lorika Stella Brenda urged all the state staff to consequently act in accordance with her Ministry's order which comes in compliance with the circular.

The Minister clarified that though announcement is left open, there is no deadline but it is a must that the affected targets must adhere to.

She defended reason behind the latest move that the Documents would play great to unlock opportunities like travel outside the Country, for identity proposes and help them process their gratuities or post service benefits.

Hon. Stella cited an instance that once a civil servant wins a scholarship, it is always difficult when she or he doesn't possess all the above key documents.

She strongly protested that she has discovered a number of government Civil servants' files being empty minus the necessary documents, the situation she describes as irresponsible manner by some of the affected targets posing how come that happened.

Prior to this, the State Education Ministry directed its all staff to accordingly comply with the order to acquire nationality cards in 60 days.

While welcoming the order Education, the Acting Director General, Mr. Adelio Ojina Quinto, believes that the move lies in the interests of the employees because they are the very beneficiaries.

He told Gurtong that his administration has moved to implement the Ministerial Order and further instructed all County commissioners and all Education Directors at the Counties to take action on the same to help facilitate the process.

He complains that some employees of his Ministry have since their first employment in 1990s, have their respective files empty up to now and this will make them as individuals underprivileged or disadvantaged because of lack of Nationality IDs and other essential documents which could automatically deny them their post service benefits even when they are supposed to be entitled to as South Sudanese. ([Back to Top](#))

School administration urges students to remain calm

Gurtong.net Torit, 25/9/2013 – The school administration has initiated plans to reopen Malek Secondary School on Monday as scheduled by Mayor of Bor Municipality, Nhial Majak Nhila, though flood victims are still in the school compound.

Speaking to Matiop Ruben Mayo, the deputy head master of Malek secondary school has supported the students demand that Mayor has initiated that the school administration will resume it normal teaching on Monday.

Mayo said that the flood victims are still at the school compound and will immediately go back to the town mayor so that all the victims are evacuated in the school premises effectively.

"We know very well that the first priority in South Sudan is education and therefore, if any interfere with education, I think it is a great effect. The flood victims and our students are people

of tomorrow and therefore, we as school administration, we urging pour government to re-allocate the victims simply because not all parts of Jonglei have been flooded,” Matiom has said.

He says there are some open places whereby flood victims are suppose to be reallocated to and if there is any possibility from the government as well as from United Nations (UN) agencies, they have to see them camps such that they will be reallocated there and be given camps until the level of water reduce.

He said that went flood victims are moved away, it will gives rooms for learners so they get their future goals and they will be able to achieve their education, adding that it will not interrupt the calendar of education in this year.

“Therefore, we are eager these students to learn and we are urging our Government to see into it that both the IDPs and the students are ours and they have to be served equally,” Mayo said.

He calls the students to remain calm and patient knowing very that those people displaced and accommodated in the school as they are their parents assuring that the Government is working very hard to make sure that their problem is solved.

Ruben appeals to the students to demonstrate peacefully in a meaner that it will not affect any situation here in Jonglei state particularly within the school.

Jonglei State Acting Governor, Gabriel Gai Riam, has identified floods as a disaster that requires an emergency response and pledge that the state government will organize on how to resettle the flood victims. ([Back to Top](#))

29 dead in 3 days of Sudan riots - medics

Radio Voice of Russia, 26/9/2013 – At least 29 people have been killed in three days of rioting in Sudan sparked by a government decision to scrap subsidies on fuel, medical officials said on Thursday.

"We have received the bodies of 21 people" since the protests began on Monday, a hospital source in Khartoum's twin city Omdurman told AFP.

Eight other people were killed in other regions across the country, witnesses and families said. ([Back to Top](#))

Opposition & rebel groups denounce gov't bloody campaign against protesters

Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 25/9/2013 – Two opposition and rebel forces condemned the use of violence by the Sudanese authorities against the peaceful demonstrations across the country and announced their support to the protesters.

Reports emerging from the country say the security forces shot over ten protesters in different towns during the past three days, while unconfirmed reports speak about more than hundred victims killed antiriot police and gunmen plain-clothes.

The peaceful protesters chanted slogans against the lift of fuel and basic commodities subsidies and called for regime change.

"The SRF and the SPLM-N condemn the killing of peaceful demonstrators and urge the Sudanese people in Diaspora and the friends of Sudan, civil societies and democratic countries to condemn the Sudan government and urging them to stop killing, torturing and detaining peaceful demonstrators," said Yasir Arman in a statement released on Wednesday morning.

The SPLM secretary general further reaffirmed their support to the "peaceful uprising" adding it would open a way for a “democratic peaceful settlement for war issues and building a new society that is based on equal citizenship and democracy”.

Arman who urged their supporters in the different regions to actively participate in the anti-austerity protests was keen in his statement to not mention any intervention or armed support to the demonstration.

However, the SRF spokesperson Abu El-Gasim Imam in a statement issued on Tuesday warned that they would "not stand idly" if the regime continues to wage its bloody campaign against the peaceful demonstrators.

The Sudanese government in the past claimed that rebel groups would use such protest to attack the capital and attack civilians.

The new austerity plan imposed this week is largely unpopular. Reports from the capital Khartoum say it is disapproved even by a large number of the regime supporters.

The government which pledged to increase the salaries of poor people says the "necessary economic measures" are justified by the "continuing economic sanctions against the peoples of Sudan".

However opposition parties and rebels accuse the government of using the national resources to fuel its war against the armed groups in Blue Nile, South Kordofan states and Darfur region.

In Khartoum, the National Umma Party (NUP) of Sadiq Al-Mahdi released a statement denouncing the bloody repression of peaceful protesters and announced its support to peaceful demonstration.

"The National Umma Party announces clearly its full rejection of the recent economic decisions lifting the subsidies, and believes that the government wants the Sudanese people to shoulder its mistakes in total disregard of the deteriorating situation", said a statement released following a meeting held on Tuesday evening.

The opposition party further stressed that the current situation proves the economic and political failure of Bashir's government and renewed its call for a new national regime to realise a comprehensive peace, "full democratic transformation" and to implement an economic reform agreed by all political forces.

Sadiq Al-Mahdi held a series of meetings with the Sudanese president Omer Al-Bashir and reiterated his call for a national roundtable including all the political forces to lay out the basis of a democratic regime and settle the regional conflicts. ([Back to Top](#))

Sudanese president will not fly to U.S. for UN general assembly meetings

AllAfrica.com Khartoum, 26/9/2013 – The Sudanese president Omer Hassan al-Bashir has cancelled his planned trip to the United States thus averting an awkward and embarrassing situation to the United Nations and the Obama administration alike.

However, a source told Sudan Tribune on Wednesday that as of today Bashir has yet to receive his US visa.

The Sudanese leader was placed on the speakers list for the UNGA session on Thursday but today the UN confirmed that Bashir will not be coming.

"Protocol has now confirmed that Sudan has cancelled President Bashir's appearance at the General Assembly," a UN spokesman, Jerome Bernard, told Agence France Presse (AFP).

The spokesman said that Sudan's Foreign Minister Ali Karti would now address the assembly on Friday.

"We understand he is not coming and we're glad he's not coming," Christian Wenaweser, the U.N. ambassador of Liechtenstein and former president of the Assembly of ICC States Parties told the Washington Post.

"We think it would have been bad for the United Nations to host someone who has been issued and international arrest warrant" Wenaweser added.

The Washington Post said the cancellation followed several days of diplomatic efforts by the US to convince Bashir not to come to the United States, warning that it could not guarantee he would not be subject to arrest, according to U.N. based diplomats. ([Back to Top](#))

Ex-IMF chief Strauss-Kahn takes job as bank boss

Reuters Paris, 25/9/2013 – Former IMF chief Dominique Strauss-Kahn has been named head of an investment firm, marking another step in the business comeback of a man whose career and French presidential hopes were ruined by a sex scandal.

In a statement published by his public relations aide, the man known to many as DSK said he had been appointed president of an investment firm with operations in finance centres including Switzerland, Luxembourg, Monaco, Belgium, Israel and Romania.

It said the firm founded by French banker Thierry Leyne in 1994 will undergo a name change from the current Anatevka to LSK - Leyne, Strauss-Kahn and Partners. Strauss-Kahn will develop its investment banking and debt-restructuring activities.

Strauss-Kahn has used his IMF experience and reputation as a talented economist to rebuild a career in finance, as an adviser to the governments of Serbia and South Sudan as well as Russian and Moroccan banks.

The 64-year-old economist, who fronted International Monetary Fund rescues of debt-crushed countries in his time at the helm, was forced to quit the Washington-based public lender in 2011 after a New York hotel maid accused him of sexual assault.

He has since settled a civil case taken by the maid after criminal charges were dropped, but now awaits trial in France over a separate affair where he faces pimping charges over sex parties he attended. He denies wrongdoing. ([Back to Top](#))

The international community has no right to prevent a unilateral referendum in Abyei

Sudantribune.com, 25/9/2013 – The Communique of the 397th Meeting of the AUPSC at the level of the Heads of State and Government, 23 September 2013, offers nothing to the Dinka Ngok community. No date for a referendum. No revised timetable. No mechanisms for achieving referendum without the willing consent of the Government of Sudan. No way of removing SAF from Kec/Diffra. Not even a promise of a special AUPSC session on Abyei.

It even insults them by attributing the threat of a unilateral referendum to RSS, as if the Dinka Ngok community were not capable of carrying it out themselves. Paragraph 11 states that “Council urges the two countries not to undertake any unilateral actions concerning Abyei that might impede progress towards the implementation of these commitments.” However, the threat of unilateral, peaceful, action does not come from the state of South Sudan but from the Ngok community itself.

Community leaders have used the threat of unilateral referendum to put pressure on the African Union to act. However, the threat originates from the grassroots. It is grassroots Ngok who started registering with their chiefs in preparation for this action. No community leader could force any Ngok to leave Juba and go to Abyei if they did not want to. Ordinary people in Abyei and Agok feel that enough is enough, that they want to “do something” and express their beliefs about their land. They know the chances of persuading the international community to endorse the results of a unilateral referendum are slim, but they want to do this for themselves, regardless. They do not fear complicating the efforts of the AUHIP, because they have no confidence that the AUHIP will ever resolve the issue.

In December 2010, a unilateral self-declaration by Ngok was avoided. Ngok decided to refrain from making a self-declaration that Abyei was in Southern Sudan out of goodwill to other Southerners, to avoid jeopardising Southern independence, and at the request of Deng Alor and Pagan Amum, then acting on behalf of the Government of South Sudan. Now South Sudan is independent, and Deng Alor and Pagan Amum are no longer part of the government, these conditions do not exist. RSS is not able to prevent a peaceful unilateral referendum exercise in Abyei, no matter how much pressure the international community puts on it.

No-one has the right to prevent Ngok from carrying out a unilateral referendum. The international community has the right not to endorse the results, but it does not have the right to prevent Ngok freedom of assembly or freedom of expression. UNISFA’s mandate to protect civilians is not

affected. Even if the UN disapproves of the peaceful activities of Ngok, they must still protect civilians against any attempt to disrupt those activities.

Those urging communities to refrain from violence should also support a unilateral referendum if, as now seems likely, the Ngok community choose that path. The alternative to taking this action is not any action; it is to do something else. Empowering those within the community (especially in the church) arguing against violence, may mean supporting a unilateral referendum, even if we are dubious. *(Back to Top)*

Tim Flatman is based in Agok, Abyei. He can be contacted on his twitter account: @Tim_Flatman

From child soldier to peace builder

Trust.org, 26/9/2013 – I come from Panriang County of Unity State in South Sudan, an area that is rich of oil and where, in fact, about 50 percent of our oil reserves get explored. In 1987, when I was in my early teenage years, I joined the Sudan People's Liberation Army/ Movement (SPLM/A). At that time, a lot of innocent Sudanese civilians particularly from Southern Sudan suffered from years of attacks on their villages, bombings and fighting. I grew up in a country that had already experienced two decades of war – conflict was all I knew. I wanted to join the liberation struggle for South Sudan; I could not stand the violence anymore and hoped that one day I could live in a free and peaceful country. I became a child soldier.

Me, and a lot of other children of the same age walked from the south of Sudan to Ethiopia, where the SPLM/A base was. We walked for three months. I then spent five years in Ethiopia and after the fall of Mengistu Haile Mariam, the former President of Ethiopia in 1991, we flew back to South Sudan. At this point, I also realized that fighting would not help my country and left the SPLA and seek education opportunities. Making things worse, our return coincided with the split of the SPLA into two groups. These were the most destructive moments in the history of the South Sudanese struggle for freedom, when both parts of the liberation movement turned against each other. This split divided two of the main tribes in South Sudan, the Dinka and the Nuer. Both started fighting against each other and that divide lasts until today. It is one of the reasons why it continues to be so difficult to bring a stable peace to our country.

However, that time also proved a turning point in my life. I got an opportunity to go to the Kakuma Refugee Camp in North Western Kenya, where I could attend school for the first time in my life. It was very tough: the area was dusty and very hot, I had little food to eat and I had neither parents nor relatives to provide moral and material support to me. I came to Kenya with many other child soldiers. We became known as the 'Lost Boys'.

However, suffering was nothing new to me. I have seen and experienced it before, so I stayed strong. Finishing my education was my only wish. Why? Because I wanted to contribute to building my nation one day; I was waiting for the day when peace would finally come to South Sudan. That was my motivation. At that time, I saw many of my school comrades leaving for the United States of America where they get resettled. I still have contact with some of them, via email, Facebook or Skype.

After finishing my education, I felt that I needed to join the humanitarian world to save the lives of poor people and help the victims of violence and conflict. I especially wanted to contribute to peace building and conflict resolution. Given my personal experience, I believe that there can't be development without peace. Conflict destroys lives, livelihoods, it devastates a whole country. So I finally turned my life around from being a child soldier to becoming a peace builder.

For nine years, I have worked with national and International organizations in South Sudan and outside South Sudan at senior positions. Today I work with CARE South Sudan as Peace Building and Conflict Mitigation Coordinator. I train CARE staff on 'DO NO HARM' principles and give technical support to our peace building officers. In practice, this means that we need to assess carefully the potential conflicts we could create when implementing a project. CARE works in areas that are still very insecure, where fighting between tribes occur daily. So for example, we need to ensure that we are not seen as assisting one tribe in favor of another. We need to be aware of all these sensitive aspects of conflict, so we don't accidentally create violence. We also help communities settling conflicts, training them in reconciliation methods

and setting up peace committees in villages. We as CARE have been working with some of these communities for a long time; they know us and accept our assistance.

I believe that almost five decades of war and conflict had deep impacts on the South Sudanese population. People are traumatized, scared and angry. When people only know conflict, it is difficult for them to transfer to a peaceful society. It takes time to heal the scars. So we have a lot of work ahead of us to build a peaceful and stable South Sudan. ([Back to Top](#))

For further information or media enquiries please contact:
UNMISS Spokesperson
Tel.: +211 (0) 912 06 7149 or Mobile: +211 (0) 912 396 539