



## South Sudan Watch Update

16 – 23 March 2018



### **UNMISS mandate extended to 2019**

The United Nations Security Council last week extended the mandate of the UN mission in South Sudan until March 2019. In a statement the Security Council, the United Nations Mission In South Sudan (UNMISS) will continue its mandate with a ceiling of 17,000 UN troops supplemented by the Regional Protection Force (RPF). Currently the UNMISS has about 18,000 troops in South Sudan. UNMISS also has the largest number of United Nations volunteers with about 380 serving in South Sudan.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile the government in Juba is not pleased with the extension of the UNMISS mandate and expressed their dismay through the information minister and government spokesperson Michael Makuei. Mr. Makuei said that the renewal of the UNMISS mandate was uncalled for especially because the government was not consulted on the matter. He went ahead to question the sovereignty of South Sudan if such a decision could be made without consulting the government first.<sup>2</sup>

### **Ceasefire violations continue**

The parties in South Sudan conflict continue to violate the ceasefire. In the last week alone, the rebel forces allied to Dr. Riek Macher accused government troops of attacking them and killing one of their fighters. According to the SPLA-IO spokesperson in Yei, Wayi Godwill Edward, the government troops attacked their positions in Kirinya village. The rebels say they were able to repel the government fighters but they lost one of their own in the process. According to Mr. Wayi the

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<sup>1</sup> James Deng Dimo, "United Nations Mission In South Sudan Mandate Renewed Till 2019," Gurtong, 17 March 2018, available at

<http://www.gurtong.net/ECM/Editorial/tabid/124/ctl/ArticleView/mid/519/articleId/21364/United-Nations-Mission-In-South-Sudan-Mandate-Renewed-Till-2019.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> Joeph Oduha, "South Sudan Wants UN Peacekeepers Out" Gurtong, 19 March 2018, available at

<http://www.gurtong.net/ECM/Editorial/tabid/124/ctl/ArticleView/mid/519/articleId/21366/South-Sudan-Wants-UN-Peacekeepers-Out.aspx>

same village was attacked three days before by government troops but this time civilians were injured in the attack.<sup>3</sup>

In a separate attack, two traders were killed and another wounded when a commercial vehicle was attacked by unknown gunmen who shot the traders, wounded one and abducted a woman. The rebel minister of information in Bieh state, John Daniel, accused the government of involvement in this attack.<sup>4</sup>

### **It's not safe for refugees to return, says UN**

The South Sudan government has been encouraging refugees to return home after they were able to capture and secure areas previously held by rebels. The United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees says, however, that it is unsafe for refugees to return to South Sudan because there is still fighting in the country and abductions are still happening. Maria Corinna Miguel Quicho, Assistant Representative for Protection at UNHCR South Sudan said that the refugees are better off staying in the refugee camps than returning home at this time.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> "SPLA-IO accuses South Sudanese army of fresh attacks in Yei state," *Sudan Tribune*, 17 March 2018, available at <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article64959>

<sup>4</sup> "Two traders killed in attack in Bieh: rebel official," *Radio Tamazuj*, 18 March 2018, available at <https://radiotamazuj.org/en/news/article/two-traders-killed-in-attack-in-bieh-rebel-official>

<sup>5</sup> "UNHCR says not safe for South Sudanese refugees to return home" Xinhua, 21 March 2018, available at [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-03/21/c\\_137053412.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-03/21/c_137053412.htm)