



# United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)

Media & Spokesperson Unit

Communications & Public Information Office

## STATEMENT

Juba, 11 March 2014

### STATEMENT OF MAJOR GENERAL DELALI JOHNSON SAKYI

#### UNMISS FORCE COMMANDER

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am Major General Delali Johnson Sakyi.

I am addressing you today in my capacity as the Force Commander of the troops serving with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). In that capacity, I am responsible for overseeing and supervising all activities and operations of our peacekeeping contingents throughout the country.

I am also speaking to you as the most senior Ghanaian officer in the Mission. In that capacity I have an obligation to clarify the issue of the weapons and ammunition belonging to the newly-arrived Ghanaian contingent, after its cargo which was being transported to Bentiu via Rumbek was found to include weapons and ammunition.

Yesterday, in fact, I visited Rumbek where I travelled on a joint mission with the Government to look into this incident. I am very pleased that the mission to Rumbek took place in close collaboration with the South Sudanese authorities, and I hope that subsequent investigations into last week's incident will clarify the circumstances which have led to this very unfortunate incident.

As the Force Commander of UNMISS and the most senior Ghanaian officer in South Sudan, I want to confirm that the weapons and ammunition belong to the Ghanaian contingent which is to deploy in Bentiu. The Ghanaian contingent has just arrived in South Sudan as part of the additional troops authorized by the Security Council. It is in South Sudan to help protect civilians, assist with access to civilians who have fled the recent fighting and violence, as well as to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Let me be clear, the weapons and ammunition found in Rumbek were never intended to serve any other purpose than that of peace and protection of South Sudanese civilians.

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They were not intended for the use of any other entity than the new Ghanaian contingent, and they were not being transported clandestinely. This is also why we readily agreed to the inspection of the cargo at the checkpoint in Rumbek.

Let me also add that the pictures that have been circulating on the Internet, claiming that land mines are among the cargo, are not correct. The pictures are showing canisters for masks or respirators. Please take note of this.

However, it is very unfortunate that, despite the clear policy of UNMISS, that all ammunition and weapons should not be transported by road due to the security situation, but must go by air, a packing error has resulted in several containers with weapons and ammunition being moved by road. As conveyed in a prior press statement, this is a highly regrettable mistake.

We are expecting a high level delegation to arrive from New York imminently to undertake investigations with the Government of South Sudan. This will enable the Mission to understand how this unfortunate error could occur, and prevent a repeat of such serious mistakes.

As the Force Commander of UNMISS, I hope this process will allow the Mission to proceed with its mandated tasks in coordination with the Government of South Sudan in good faith.

Thank you.