



United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)

Media & Spokesperson Unit

Communications & Public Information Office

PRESS RELEASE

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UNMISS condemns targeted killings of hundreds of foreign and South Sudanese civilians in Bentiu

UNMISS strongly condemns the targeted killings of civilians based on their ethnic origins and nationality in Bentiu. UNMISS also strongly condemns the use of Radio Bentiu FM by some individuals associated with the opposition to broadcast hate speech. While some SPLA in Opposition commanders did broadcast messages calling for unity and an end to tribalism, others broadcast hate messages declaring that certain ethnic groups should not stay in Bentiu and even calling on men from one community to commit vengeful sexual violence against women from another community.

UNMISS Human Rights investigators have confirmed that when SPLA in Opposition forces captured Bentiu on 15 and 16 April, they searched a number of places where hundreds of South Sudanese and foreign civilians had taken refuge and killed hundreds of the civilians after determining their ethnicity or nationality. "These atrocities must be fully investigated and the perpetrators and their commanders shall be held accountable", said the Officer in Charge of UNMISS, Raisedon Zenenga, who also reminded the parties of their respective obligations to protect civilians and called on them to immediately stop the targeting of innocent, unarmed civilians, and to respect the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement they signed in January.

At Bentiu Hospital, on 15 April, several Nuer men, women and children were killed for hiding and declining to join other Nuers who had gone out to cheer the SPLA in Opposition forces as they entered the town. Individuals from other South Sudanese communities, as well as Darfuris, were specifically targeted and killed at the hospital. On the same day, the SPLA in Opposition forces entered the Kali-Ballee Mosque where civilians had taken shelter, separated individuals of certain nationalities and ethnic groups and escorted them to safety, while the others were killed. More than 200 civilians were reportedly killed and over 400 wounded at the Mosque. At the Catholic church and at the vacated WFP compound, SPLA in Opposition soldiers similarly asked civilians who had taken refuge there to identify their ethnic origins and nationalities and proceeded to target and kill several individuals.

Between 15 and 17 April, UNMISS extracted hundreds of civilians who were facing threats of violence in several places in Bentiu and Rubkona where they had taken refuge. Over 500 civilians, including many wounded, were extracted from the Bentiu Hospital and other places, while thousands were escorted as they walked to the UNMISS base. The Mission is currently protecting over 12,000 civilians in its base.

In keeping with its human rights mandate, UNMISS continues to investigate the widespread human rights violations committed by both sides, not only in Bentiu, but in all areas affected by the ongoing conflict. In the coming weeks, the Mission will publish a comprehensive report on the human rights violations committed since the beginning of the conflict on 15 December 2013.

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