

Note to correspondents: Statement by Adama Dieng, United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, on his meeting with leaders of the South Sudan Council of Churches

(New York, 26 April 2018) The Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, Adama Dieng, met with the South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC) leaders in New York to discuss the ongoing crisis in South Sudan.

The SSCC leaders expressed concern at the continued deterioration of the human rights, humanitarian and economic situation in South Sudan. They observed that the parties to the conflict, including Government forces, continue to commit serious violations against the civilian population, including killings, rape and pillaging that in some cases could constitute atrocity crimes. They urged the international community not to abandon South Sudan, but rather to intensify advocacy with the parties to immediately end the conflict. They also underscored the need for the international community to prioritize accountability for the serious crimes that have been committed since the conflict broke out, noting that impunity continues to fuel the violence and serious violations and abuses.

Mr. Dieng commended the SSCC leadership for their peace initiatives and pledged full support for their work. He reiterated the importance of accountability to peace and reconciliation in South Sudan. “The parties to the conflict in South Sudan should not hide behind peace negotiations to protect perpetrators of serious crimes. I call on the Transitional Government of National Unity and the African Union to expedite the establishment of the Hybrid Court”, the Special Adviser said.

Since the conflict broke out in 2013, thousands of civilians have been killed in targeted attacks, women raped, homes and means of livelihoods destroyed. Most of the attacks are ethnically and politically motivated. More than 1.5 million South Sudanese are living as refugees in neighbouring countries and more than 300,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) are living under the protection of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) in Protection of Civilians (POC) sites across the country.