

## **Security Council Press Statement on Sexual Violence in South Sudan**

The members of the Security Council condemned in the strongest terms the heinous incidents of sexual and gender-based violence against women near Bentiu in northern South Sudan in recent weeks.

The members of the Security Council expressed deep concern about the well-being of the victims, who, according to reports, included more than 150 women and girls who were attacked by armed men in military and civilian clothing, in Government-controlled areas throughout Rubkona County.

The members of the Security Council called on the Government of South Sudan to condemn the attacks, to ensure that a full investigation is carried out and those responsible are held accountable, and to break the cycle of impunity for sexual and gender-based violence.

The members of the Security Council expressed their grave concern at the use of sexual violence by parties to the conflict in South Sudan against the civilian population, particularly against women and girls and recalled that rape and other forms of sexual violence in the context of armed conflict may constitute war crimes.

The members of the Security Council emphasized that those responsible for violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of human rights must be held accountable, and that the Government of South Sudan bears the primary responsibility to protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity.

The members of the Security Council recalled their willingness to impose targeted sanctions against individuals or entities responsible for actions or policies that threaten the peace, security or stability of South Sudan including targeting of civilians, including women and children, through the commission of acts of violence, including killing, maiming, torture or rape or other sexual violence.

The members of the Security Council called on South Sudan's leaders to meet without delay all commitments made under cessation of hostilities agreements, including to refrain from attacks on the civilian population and to refrain from any acts of rape, sexual abuse and torture, and to meet all commitments made under the revitalized peace agreement, including to cease all forms of sexual and gender-based violence.

The members of the Security Council called on South Sudan's leaders to implement Chapter V of the revitalized peace agreement and expect all relevant parties to take all necessary steps towards the establishment of the Hybrid Court for South Sudan and the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing.

The members of the Security Council reiterated their full support for UNMISS and its

mandate to deter and prevent sexual and gender-based violence within its capacity and areas of deployment, and to monitor, investigate, verify and report on violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law.

The members of the Security Council commended United Nations agencies, partners, and donors for their efforts to provide urgent and coordinated support to the population, including victims of sexual and gender-based violence and recognized the pressing need for ongoing and sustained support, including medical, psychosocial and legal, for victims.

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