



**Near-verbatim transcript of the Press Conference
by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General Hilde F. Johnson
UNMISS Offices - Tomping, Juba**

Good morning ladies and gentlemen and welcome to the first UNMISS press conference of 2012.

Let me start by wishing you, the members of the media, a happy and prosperous new year. Your role is key to a healthy democracy and I hope our interactions will help keep the people of South Sudan informed not only about our role but also about the important ongoing work in consolidating a democratic transition. I would like also to welcome and introduce my new Deputy, Mr Raisdon Zenenga. He joined the mission few days ago as Deputy Special Representative (Political) in charge of the political pillar of the mission. Mr. Zenenga has over 28 years of service in the United Nations, government and diplomatic positions. His experience in managing peacekeeping operations in conflict and post-conflict areas constitutes a timely reinforcement and a significant asset to the mission's leadership capacity.

6 months of independence

Six months ago we witnessed the birth of a new nation, South Sudan, and the launch of the United Mission In South Sudan (UNMISS). It is an appropriate time to reflect on the initial months of UNMISS and look ahead to the issues and challenges that will face all of us in 2012 and beyond.

As we are entering the first full year in the history of the new nation, South Sudan; the South Sudanese Government and its people will take decisions that will impact not just their lives, but those of their future generations of this country.

South Sudan is moving progressively and with determination towards consolidating its independence on the national and international scenes. The new state is joining the AU, UN, IGAD, Great Lakes Conference, COMESA Nile Basin Initiative, and G7+, and has submitted its application to join the EAC. The relation with Sudan is critical to the stability not only of the two countries but also of the region. In this regard, resolving the outstanding issues relating to the border, oil and citizenship, will be determinant to the stability and the development of two countries.

On the national scene, political reforms and security are among the major challenges that the new state is facing. However, the government's introduction of political and security reforms show strong commitment to establishing a stable and democratic state worthy of the people of South Sudan. In this regard, I welcome the passing of

key pieces of legislation. The Political Parties Act and the Elections Acts have both passed the Council of Ministers and now await final endorsement by Parliament. We are now awaiting the Media Bill, and hope to see the Act be passed as soon as possible.

We welcome the timely establishment of the Constitutional Review Commission, which will have a critical role to play. The constitutional process is a key part of UNMISS' mandate, and we offer our support to the Commission and its work, both institutionally and with broad-based nation-wide consultations, as envisaged in its mandate.

Transparency and Accountability are key to good governance and a functional state. The strong commitment that has been expressed from the government needs to be followed up by action. With the two recent Presidential decrees, of 9 December and 22 December, covering a number of measures, commendable actions are now being taken.

All these actions are vital measures in the way forward to ensure a peaceful and orderly transition and to consolidate the institutions of the new and independent state.

The Mission's mandate was clearly spelled out last July by UN Security Council Resolution 1996 to set up UNMISS "to consolidate peace and security and to help establish the conditions for development" in South Sudan in order to strengthen the capacity of its Government "to govern effectively and democratically". In implementing our mandate we have established a UNMISS-Government mechanism. It meets regularly, and is co-chaired by the Vice President and me. This mechanism represents an important platform in which challenges and issues are being addressed. We are meeting today, and will discuss a number of issues, including the situation in Jonglei.

The Jonglei-crisis

The ongoing security crisis in Jonglei State is a test for all of us. All concerned should redouble their efforts to put an immediate end to the cycle of violence, which is putting thousands of lives at risk and threatening the stability of the whole area.

UNMISS strongly condemns the use of violence by communities and urges their political, traditional and youth leaders to do their utmost to end killings and confrontations in an area that has suffered far too many casualties.

In this regard, we are deeply concerned about statements hate messages that have been made by some individuals and groups. The statements could incite systematic ethnic violence. Threats were made to wipe out an entire ethnic group from the face of the earth. Such statements are in violation of both international law and South Sudan's domestic laws. Any statements that could incite ethnically based violence are totally unacceptable. The United Nations condemns them in the strongest terms. We have been informed that repetitive hate language continues to be used, calling for

ethnic violence and inciting communities to take aggressive actions. This is of grave concern. I urge the leaders of all communities at all levels in Jonglei state, and nationally, to call for a halt to any such rhetoric. I also call on the Government to bring the full force of the law to bear against those responsible for inciting violence. This kind of hate language and terminology has no place in a democratic country.

Protection of civilians is core to the mandate of UNMISS. In accordance with Security Council Resolution 1996 and within its capacity, the Mission took decisive measures. It committed around half of its combat-ready personnel to the heavily populated areas like Pibor and Likuonbole. We moved our forces to where civilians were under greatest threat. These actions combined with the presence of government troops helped save many lives.

Thanks in part to early warning, tens of thousands of civilians in Jonglei State were able to move out of harm's way in the days leading up to the attack against Murle communities. When the attack happened, the combined use of force by the SPLA, who opened fire on the armed attackers, and the effective positioning of Armoured Personnel Carriers (APCs) by the UN Mission, helped turn the Lou Nuer column around and seize the attack.

Since the attack, there has been several numbers of casualties circulated. Our preliminary findings have confirmed evidence of a number of civilians killed and injured, which is completely unacceptable. However, the findings so far do not provide the basis for the scale of casualties claimed by some media. We urge leaders and the public to avoid jumping to conclusions based on unverified human rights violations. UNMISS also commends the government's decision to conduct an investigation into the events and the numbers and who may have been responsible. We call upon the Government to hold the perpetrators of these terrible attacks and counter-attacks to account.

Sadly, the chain of retaliatory violence continues unbroken. As we all know, a number of attacks have the last few days happened on Lou Nuer communities, and now also the Dinka. We have been relocating our military forces to locations most at risk in both communal areas. Their role will be primarily to act as a deterrent to attacks from other communities. As you know, the latest target, the Dinka village of Duk Padiet, was attacked on the evening of 16 January. Not being able to fly at night, UNMISS peacekeepers deployed at first light to the area where they established a presence and provided medical aid to the victims of the attack, and helped evacuate a number of casualties to Juba and Bor.

The cycle of violence in Jonglei has caused huge suffering to all the people in the area. It has to end. UNMISS remains very concerned about the deterioration of the humanitarian situation and reiterates its call, urging the international community to respond generously and rapidly to humanitarian needs.

The UN humanitarian community has launched one of the most complex and expensive emergency operations in South Sudan since the CPA to assist 60,000

people among the 90,000 affected people in the area. UNMISS will continue to support and help in delivering vital supplies, particularly in remote areas where some of the most vulnerable people are located. My Deputy SRSG, Lise Grande, will present more detail on the humanitarian situation in a separate press conference shortly.

Over recent months UNMISS has consistently deployed its limited resources to reinforce efforts to prevent and mitigate conflict in Jonglei State, including to the Lou Nuer, Dinka and Murle communities. We have statistics that show this, as you will see. Military patrols and deployment has happened into all three communities throughout the fall to deter violence and protect civilians through preventive measures.

However, more government forces are urgently needed in key locations, as well as to patrol in the buffer zones between the communities to de-escalate tensions between the communities and avert further violence. I urge the Government to deploy additional forces and further strengthen its forces in the key areas to stop further violence.

This will also provide a basis for a peace process to make progress between the Jonglei communities. I welcome the Government's decision to establish a peace team to lead the peace process. This is a promising and positive step.

The most critical intervention is, indeed, to get the peace process between the communities off the ground. It is now very urgent that a dedicated team is appointed to move the process forward. UNMISS is committed to support this process. An impartial UNMISS will continue to be actively engaged to help prevent further violence in the area and to help the GRSS to discharge its primary responsibility to protect its civilians.

Q & A

Gurtong Trust: Are you confident that the Government of South Sudan will bring the culprits to book? If they don't (...) what happens?

Q: [indiscernible]. What modalities do you have to bring peace in Jonglei State? UNMISS forces are in Akobo, Pibor and Likuangole but we are not very sure what UNMISS is doing in those locations.

We also have reports of late – it happened in Abyei; it happened in Likuangole – that people who sought refuge at UNMISS compounds were turned out to be killed. Even our African traditions condone such acts of handing over people to those who seek to kill them. Can you clarify why UNMISS is doing that?

SRSG Hilde F. Johnson: On the first question, if I may, the Government has been strongly coming out and saying that they will now take the lead in the peace process. We trust that the Government would do so by quickly appointing and deploying a peace team. How that will be composed, who would lead it is not yet clear but we believe that the Government will identify and appoint a highly qualified team that would move this process forward to its completion.

The question of if not what happens ... we need to see this effort succeed – there is no other choice and I have confidence in the Government being able to do so and we will support the Government's efforts as much as we can and as much as required.

We also think it is important that this process is supported by a community grass roots oriented process and by a stabilisation and development preparatory process so that you don't only talk on the political side but you also have a community grass roots oriented process and we prepare for peace dividends to come to the population. Those three elements are all necessary in a comprehensive approach to peace in Jonglei.

I think all those three are critical but I have confidence that the Government will take this forward and that they will take the lead in a competent way.

On your question on hate speech, I think we all have seen the press statements and I think you are familiar with them. I don't want to give readout of these statements but I have them in front of me. We are not sure to which extent these are also statements that are involving or coming from the diaspora. It is seen that it is coming from one particular community and its armed representatives but we have several statements and rather than reiterating and quoting them here, I am happy to give you a copy later. But this is real ... these statements have been circulating on internet and I think most journalists are well familiar with them.

As regards the protection of civilians, let me just say that - well before responding to Likuengole that your question referred to, I would like just to say that Abyei is not part of this Mission's responsibility. The Mission, UNMIS with one "S", ended on the 8th of July that was for the whole of the country monitoring the CPA. This Mission, UNMISS with a double "S", is devoted to South Sudan and has no responsibility for Abyei. Abyei is now under UNISFA which is a new and different mission. It is very critical that that distinction is clearly made. This Mission was born on the 9th of July [2011]; it is only 6 months old and has no responsibility for anything that happened in Abyei previously.

Let me now answer the question on Likuengole. In Likuengole we deployed. We had very early warning that was shared with government authorities; they informed the population and civilians in Likuengole were for a large part getting out of harm's way. They were moving out in good time before the attack came. We ordered our troops to search Likuengole town for any vulnerable populations – anyone who would be in *tukuls*, disabled, elderly – we got forty-one of them out of Likuengole

before the attack but we can not rule out that there might have been some civilians left but we did a search and got out those that we could find.

Now I am not aware of any account where civilians that were trying to find protection were not provided with that. The troops are under clear instruction and, to our knowledge, this did not happen.

We would like to also say that in Pibor however we had defensive positions where civilians were protected behind the defensive positions.

The modalities in Likuengole and Pibor were therefore different so I am not sure whether your information comes from another location but, to my knowledge, this account doesn't seem to fit with the facts we have in the Mission.

Q: Your facts maybe different from mine. Even in Pibor we have heard that five people who were not attacking anybody were killed by UNMISS soldiers. They just happened to pass through the town and were shot at ... after they were asked to leave by the Vice-President.

SRSG Johnson: To my knowledge, five Lou-Nuer youth were killed by SPLA soldiers when the column came to attack Pibor town across from the river. That is the knowledge we have of that. We have no knowledge of anyone else being killed by any troops in Pibor town.

It is very important that when stories are being circulated we need to get that information and we will verify. Please if you have information of this nature, we need to have verification of this information. We have people on the ground, we have investigation teams on the ground; we can do that.

Spokesperson, a.i.: Let's take other questions. I would like to inform you that we are also linked with Malakal and Wau and the journalists out there can also ask questions.

Southern Eye: We have seen that the problem in Jonglei is fuelled by the illegal possession of arms that has from time to time been a very big problem and disarmament may be the only solution. What would be the UNMISS position in supporting the Government of South Sudan in the disarmament process?

Secondly; Madam Hilde you have underscored the role of the media in promoting a healthy democracy. Maybe on behalf of the journalists present, I would like to ask if UNMISS can facilitate a media trip for these members of the media to go to the ground and see what is happening there so that they can get the truth other than getting reports from different sources. In some of our media houses, the Lou-Nuer have been coming with their press statements, the Murle have been coming with their press statements and other communities as well. But because we could not balance these statements, sometimes we put them off. This puts us also at the danger of being seen as siding with one group at the expense of the other.

Radio Miraya: Taking into consideration the recent clashes in Jonglei State, it is like issues coming up from the past; like issues of the past have not been resolved. What can the international community really do to have an impact on an age old conflict?

Secondly; does UNMISS play a role in terms of pushing for key legislature that remain to be enacted such as the Media Bill?

SSTV: You talked of the deployment of UNMISS soldiers in affected areas like Pibor, Akobo and some parts of the Dinka-Bor areas. We always hear that the government has deployed soldiers; UNMISS has deployed soldiers and the attackers still remain at large in these areas. Can you tell us briefly why do the Government and UNMISS allow these attackers to cross these borders?

Since the wars between these three communities, we have continuously been hearing like a song to all of us that authorities want to bring the people concerned of inciting these conflicts to justice. I personally have not seen either the UN or the Government bring any such person to a court of law. Why is the Government and UNMISS failing to bring these people to justice?

SRSG Johnson: Firstly on the question on civilian disarmament, in the mandate for the Mission, we have a strong role in demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration of combatants – the DDR process. That is a very strong part of our mandate. We do not, in the UN Security Council resolution, have a mandate in civilian disarmament. This implies that we can use our good offices in relation to the government, we can provide advice as appropriate, but we are not mandated to directly engage in civilian disarmament processes. So that is my response to your question.

In terms of the media and access, I was south of Pibor last Saturday and we brought local and international media with us but I am sure we could take note of other requests for additional media to be able to travel to the state and to the affected areas. So our team would work with you on that.

The question related to the root causes; as you rightly said, this is a very old conflict that has been going on for very many years and is deeply rooted in the relations between these two communities. For this reason, this conflict and tensions need a comprehensive approach that also addresses the root causes.

This is not done in a day which is also why, from our end, we would advise to have the three-tiers – meaning the political, proactive negotiations arrangement; a grass roots community-oriented process; and thirdly it has to be matched by a process where the population sees that there are some dividends and some deliverables in terms of stabilisation and development interventions. All three are needed to create stability in Jonglei State. To which extent one is able to get to resolve all the root causes, I think it is still too early to say but one should try because otherwise this would reappear again and again.

I think among the critical responsibilities of the negotiation team that we hope the Government will be able to appoint soon would have to be to really look into and address those.

That's my response to that and we will support these efforts to the maximum of our ability and as much as the Government needs our support.

On the Media Bill, we have indeed been engaging with the Ministry of Information on that. Our Political Affairs Division has actively engaged; I have also raised this issue with the Government and it is important that the Bill comes. So yes, we are using our good offices also in this regard.

To the question from the South Sudan Television – firstly on the deployment side; from our Mission, we had seven and a half to eight of our 15 companies committed to the Jonglei operations during the height of the crisis and actually still is. This means that 50% of our combat forces were committed to it. It shows that in a country of ten states, we actually moved forces from Wau, from Equatoria, from Juba, from Malakal to help in Jonglei. This means that we have maximised the use of our resources where the highest population were located under the height of the attack.

Now we are seeing a different type of pattern of attacks; now the attackers are going with speed, unpredictable, you can't detect them in advance and they are moving very quickly into areas that you really can't tell. You could see a pattern of where they are moving but we, with all our helicopters, are not able to detect that they are going to that village or not that. We can try and we could deploy some people on the ground but we could ... run and hit ... you know we would not be able to be in the right position.

So the challenge with protection of civilians with the current counter-attacks means that the unpredictability of the attackers, the speed, the small groups they are moving in, makes it very, very difficult.

The primary responsibility for security in this country rests with the Government, the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army (SPLA) and the South Sudan Police Services (SSPS), that is they have the responsibility to protect their own citizens. That is why I am calling for additional deployments and additional deployments in the buffer zones.

Now, for the attackers, nobody is allowing the attackers to operate. But if one were to prevent them from operating, you would have to have already a deployment in the buffer zone that is almost without any gap. This would require a very significant military deployment. We are actually looking at numbers at the moment with our military; there is no way our Mission can fill that gap in this context. It would demand a very, very significant military operation and the Government also would have to move significant forces to make that happen.

So the issue is that we need to try to resolve this in a different way, meaning that the only way to stop the attackers is to both have prevention with military deterrent

deployments – we are doing that very actively. You will get a chart, two pieces of information from us from the military side as you leave today. I just want to use the opportunity to say a few words about that.

One of them is outlining since the attacks in Pieri in August. This is the deployment that we had done into all three communities in Jonglei into the hotspots. It covers the numbers of patrols in the areas of the Lou-Nuer, the areas of the Dinka and the areas of the Murle. It will show that we have been following, of course, the patterns of attack, meaning that we have shown presence in the areas of risk. Where we had seen that there is a risk of attack, we would deploy. So we have had the information flowing into our team and the deployment map and pattern.

It shows that it is an almost one-third, one-third deployment through the months between August and December.

We would also share with you the next map which is of our deployments in response to the current crisis. It is from 20 December to yesterday [18 January 2012]. Since the numbers of civilians under most threat were from the Pibor County area, it shows more deployments into the Murle area but it also shows the shift into the Lou-Nuer and Dinka areas which has happened following the recent attacks.

A deterrent deployment is what we are doing now – dropping platoons and deploying companies into the areas. Stopping the attackers is very difficult for the reasons I mentioned but deterring them is what we are trying to do but it has to be the peace process between the communities that is the way to really stop this violence from getting out of hand.

On the perpetrators, those that are inciting violence, inciting ethnic violence and inciting violence in this way is against the penal code of South Sudan. So the Penal Code includes legislation here. From the Government side, it is in their hands and I have said in my statements that we believe it is important to hold them to account. The UN itself does not have a mandate under criminal justice, meaning that we can not arrest people. The UN can report to the Security Council and we are asked in our mandate to report to the Government and to report to the UN Security Council on grave violations of human rights against people. We would do so and, of course depending on what comes out of our human rights investigations here, we would have to report also on the events of the past weeks. However, arresting is not in our mandate.

One needs to know though that the International Criminal Court is an institution that can take action in these cases at the request of the Security Council. So that also is important to be aware of but it is not the United Nations that has that responsibility.

Bloomberg: I recognise that there is difficulty in counting the number of casualties from these attacks as you said there are a number of figures floating around. It would be helpful if you could provide some clarification on the number of casualties that have been counted up to this point.

During the run-up to these attacks there were weeks when UN aerial patrols were [*indiscernible*] so this wasn't a surprise. There weren't enough troops deployed to prevent the attacks but yet after the attacks, the Government was able to deploy 3,000 security personnel. Why do you think it was that they weren't able to deploy the troops before the attacks and is there anything that UNMISS can do to help in that kind of operation or do you need more resources like helicopters to move troops?

AFP: On a similar vein, this morning or yesterday Ban Ki-Moon said that the UN was completely under resourced and overwhelmed by this attack that they saw coming including the pullout of many Russian helicopters and having to beg neighbours. Will there be a ramp-up of operations? Is the UN going to be able to bolster its efforts or will we get a crisis happening in terms of resources?

AP: Just curious to know your level of confidence in the Government's peace-building attempts as this crisis ends and moves into a sort of a long-term phase. We have heard some accusations of Government bias in these conflicts, specifically in higher level positions in the government so I am wondering how confident are you that the Government can adjudicate between these two communities fairly?

SRSG Johnson: First on the figures; we have a situation on the ground and I saw that myself visiting Fartait and the areas in and around Pibor, people are still returning from the bush. Many of them moved from harm's way and are insecure about returning. We are in a situation where humanitarian assistance would be provided in five locations and, as I mentioned, the DSRSG/RC/HC will refer to these pieces of information later in a different press conference I think in a couple of days. But this means that there is a very significant problem in assessing numbers at the moment because people are still looking for their families, they are looking for their loved ones and they don't know who is missing and who is there.

What we can do is count any bodies that we are seeing and we are doing that. We have also been doing reccees [*reconnaissance flights*] over the areas to look at the numbers of *tukuls* burnt and so on but there is no credibility in the total figure here that would lead to a number that can give an indication. It is far too early.

I think that is what I can say at the moment. I have my military here who have been part of the reccees for the last two weeks and I see they are nodding.

On the Government deployment of police and troops, we did discuss and urged the Government very early in December to deploy more. Clearly one of the challenges faced by the government side is logistical hurdles to get the troops or the police on the ground. This goes both with air assets and the problems with transport on the road. Just to give you one example, the deployment of additional police which actually happened before the 31st of December – I mean in December they started to move SSPS from Bor to Pibor, I think it was 400 –it was stuck in the mud on the way ... completely stuck in the mud and could not move. These are some of the problems we are faced with. Of course, December you still had those issues; now it is

easier to deploy because the weather has changed. So it is not only about Government will to move but it is also really about logistical reasons and the fact the rainy season was at its very end and it is now dry season. Those are among the challenges that they have encountered.

I am pleased to see a much stronger deployment at this time. We have significant deployments in the Murle areas, in Pibor, etc. but we now also need to see strong and forceful deployments both in the buffer zone and in the Lou-Nuer and Dinka areas as I have also urged in my statement.

On the question on the reference to the Secretary-General's statement about the crisis on whether the Mission was overwhelmed; it was actually outnumbered. There is a distinction between overwhelmed and outnumbered. One of the reasons why we used the early warning as a tool here was that even if we had had moved all, not only 50%, of the UNMISS combat forces over there, we wouldn't have had a chance against the attackers. So the basic strategy is to use early warning to help civilians get out of harm's way and then where we need to protect civilians, to have defensive positions where civilians can come behind, and be protected and that is what we used in Pibor quite effectively. That is how we address that.

Now do we need more resources? It is the United Nations Security Council that has both given us the mandate and has decided on the number of troops and the level of assets that we have. But it is clear to us that we need more resources in exactly the same way as the Secretary-General said. The Secretary-General rightly said that we need more resources and more assets to be able to address and fulfil the mandate we have been given.

Finally on the question from **AP** on the Government and its peacekeeping efforts and whether there is a bias or not; the Government is very well aware and is more aware than any of us of the history of the grievances of this country and the tensions and challenges in the relations between the communities in Jonglei State. They are also the best to assess how to address them. The key is not which government official comes from here or there; the key is to identify a peace team that is neutral and is seen as strong and competent and has credibility with everyone. That is what will really make the big difference and I am sure the Government is capable of identifying a team that is able to do this in the right way.

AP: Just a clarification, did you say that more troops are needed to build the buffer zone? I was just wondering if you had a figure on that.

SRSG Johnson: No we don't. We are running numbers but it is too early to say ... but it is a very significant amount. It is important for at least international journalists here to know that Jonglei State is as big as Bangladesh. This just gives an illustration of the vastness of the territory.

South Sudan Radio: Is the humanitarian assistance targeting Jonglei going to all the communities in the area, i.e. the Lou-Nuer, the Dinka and the Murle?

There have been reports in circulation that the Khartoum government has been supporting some youth groups in Jonglei with ammunition. Can you confirm this?

People have been saying that sometimes when people seek refuge in UN compounds, attackers would follow and even kill the people. I don't know whether your Chapter VII mandate is working or about to start working.

Bakhita Radio: You know independence is new and dear to us. When the Chapter VII mandate was approved by the UN, we were not an independent country and can only say it was imposed on us. The UN determined that we needed protection although I questioned the reason why. The Mission is not renewed in Sudan and we see a lot of killing there.

The mandate is only six months old and I think it goes on for a year and the UN would have to review whether or not it would be renewed. Your main mandate is to protect civilians but when we hear about 47 or 83 people dying in Duk or Jalle and other areas, we wonder whether the mandate is effective or whether it should be strengthened. My key question is: when the mandate is renewed again, will the Republic of South Sudan be a party to that?

Press TV: You said that the UN was outnumbered. Russia is now considering withdrawing its forces from UNMISS. What impact would that have on your operations now that you are being outnumbered or under-resourced? Does that have anything to do with the foreigners who were arrested in [*indiscernible*] by the South Sudanese security forces?

SRSG Johnson: On the humanitarian question, all humanitarian assistance is needs based and is not politically motivated. So it is very important to know that very judicious assessments are being made by the humanitarian community following very strict procedures on looking at GAM (Global Acute Malnutrition) and SAM (Severe and Acute Malnutrition) levels and a number of other needs. On that basis they assess who should be given assistance and how much. My DSRSG would be able to give more details on how this is being done. This means that it is not politically driven in the sense that we have to give some there, some there and some there. It is only following the clear principles of neutrality and impartiality on the basis of facts and evidence.

There is a major humanitarian operation on the way into the Murle areas but there is also, on the basis of the needs assessment moving into Akobo and elsewhere. I would refer to (DSRSG) Lis Grande to give you more on this.

On the question of the role of the Khartoum government, it is not our mandate to assess anything that goes on cross-border; that is the mandate of the monitoring mission that the Security Council has decided to establish. We do not have the mandate to dig into that.

Secondly; we are aware that George Athor has been involved in one way or the other but we do not have any evidence of what has happened and what type of

arrangements have been made in relation to any of the attacks. I can't give you more on this.

On the question on Chapter VII, we are in a situation where the Security Council has the sovereign authority to decide, assessing the situation, developing a resolution and agreeing. There would be a renewal discussion of the mandate, clearly, but normally it is not significantly changed after three months. However, there are normally – though we are not obliged – some consultations with the government and we have something called benchmarks that we will develop that would be agreed with the Government on what the criteria are for the success of the Mission and of the South Sudan Government and that also would be later something that can determine the exit. That is the mechanism one uses for the discussions around the mandate and its renewal.

In terms of Chapter VII, it is because of the Chapter VII mandate we have that we have been able to so forcefully deploy and act in the crisis we have seen. Without a Chapter VII mandate we would have much more difficulty in deploying the military in the way that we have done. If one were to criticise the Chapter VII mandate or find out how unhelpful, we would have had much more constraints on us in implementing the mandate and one would not be in a position to call for us to do much more – if you see the distinction. So one has, to in a way, choose: if one has a mandate we need to be empowered to act on it and that is what we are trying to do.

If we don't look at the concrete questions which you asked which was the Duk Padiet and the other attacks, I just have to repeat the same answer that I gave to **South Sudan TV** that is: when you can't predict where the attackers are coming, where they are coming – they move speedily, evening and night – we would have had to be everywhere, all the time. We are not everywhere and we are not there all the time ... I wish we could but then we would have needed a much stronger operation way beyond anything that the Security Council has ever authorised in any country. I think I can say that.

In relation to the responsibility for the security, the Government forces are much bigger than ours; the SPLA has, as its primary responsibility, to protect its citizens. We can only come in support to that protective effort and that is the answer to your question. It is the Government's responsibility and we can support.

VoP Radio: [Question on disarmament].

What strategy has UNMISS together with the Government of HE Salva Kiir got in place to combat the devil of ignorance among our people?

(Malakal): What are the solutions that have been set by the UN to help the Government in Jonglei State to solve the problems of the Lou-Nuer and Murle communities and the challenges facing the UN here to solve this problem?

What role does the UN play in terms of helping local authorities curb the conflicts in Jonglei State?

Media coverage in Jonglei State is very poor. What are the reasons behind that? What role could the UN play to strengthen the media houses including in the states?

Radio Miraya (Malakal): What the UN and the Government of the Republic of South Sudan are doing to bring the perpetrators of the Lou-Nuer - Murle conflict in Jonglei State to justice?

What role is the UN playing to return the displaced from these fighting to their areas?

SRSG Johnson: On the helicopter question which I didn't pick up on from the previous question, let me say that we now have no conclusion yet from the Russian Republic as to what they are going to do with the aviation unit that they are having and have so far committed to have here. Should they decide otherwise, we are working on other options to fill the gap. I think it is not correct for me to say which options at this point in time but we are working on two tracks now that is to get them to fly and to get an alternative if that doesn't happen.

On the questions related to civilian disarmament and education, as I mentioned earlier, we have a strong role in disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of combatants (DDR). In the Mission's mandate, there is no reference to civilian disarmament. The Government has taken a strong role in that; there has been disarmament processes in Lakes, Warrap and Unity states. There has been a signal from the Government that they are planning a disarmament process also for Jonglei State. The only role we can have is to advise on safe storage of weapons, to potentially use our good offices to assist on advising in what useful and good strategies but we do not have a direct involvement in civilian disarmament as per our mandate.

On education, this is something belonging to the UN agencies, funds and programmes, not to the UN Mission itself. The two agencies working on education in South Sudan are UNICEF and UNESCO and clearly they are supporting the government in beefing up education but the Mission itself does not have that role as per our mandate.

The questions from Malakal that were related to the solutions by the UN to help the Government solve the problems in Jonglei is a very generic question which I responded to earlier with the three-pronged strategy which we think could be the best way forward and our support to the government leadership taking the peace process to a conclusion. We would support them in their efforts and we are yet to hear exactly how they are going to take this forward. So I don't think it is appropriate for me to jump ahead of the Government and say how this process should go or how the problems in Jonglei should be resolved.

We have been supporting in the last four months a church-led process that worked with the Government, parliamentarians and community leaders in taking the peace process forward. Now we have seen that the peace process will take a different course and we have seen that the peace process will take a different course and we are ready to support that as well.

I think I have actually responded earlier to the other questions raised from Malakal. I just want to reiterate the question on our role on criminal justice; we from the UN side can not arrest anyone as I had said earlier. This is the responsibility of the Government and of international institutions. I want to reiterate though that accountability is something we have called for. I called for it both in relation to the perpetrators and in relation to those who are inciting violence. I want to repeat that hate messages is unacceptable, should not happen and those who are providing them should be accountable for them.

The number of displaced and what we are doing to help them was another question asked. This is a humanitarian responsibility and, again, my DSRSG would be able to give more answers to that. But as I mentioned, for the number of displaced in the Pibor County area, we are planning to provide assistance in five locations. We are expecting people to be able to go to those areas to get assistance and slowly rebuild their livelihoods in their homesteads. However, we do not have the capacity to transport thousands and thousands of civilians. It is not possible for us with the constraints we have on air assets. I think the same would now be the case where there is a needs assistance that confirms the needs of the people in the other areas that have been affected whether Lou-Nuer or Dinka. Again, the humanitarians would take that responsibility and hopefully we would see the possibility to assist those in need.

I want to also mention that a significant mobilisation has to happen among international donors to be able to deliver on assistance to these communities and this is not done in a day and we need the international community to be generous in this respect.

The Citizen: I wanted to know why UNMISS got information on impending attacks on the Murle while it does not get such advance information on when the Lou-Nuer or Dinka would be attacked by the Murle?

You deploy forces mainly after people have been killed. Is that part of the mandate that such deployments take place after people are killed?

Journalists have been tortured, arrested and so on. I haven't seen UNMISS condemning such actions. Is it right for UNMISS not to protect the rights of journalists in South Sudan?

The New Times: Do you think the current circumstances the UNMISS finds itself in might be damaging to the Mission?

UNMISS took over from UNMIS with a different mandate and a change in the number of combat forces. I am wondering whether there are some lessons learnt that the current mission could borrow to improve their performance on the ground.

The Washington Post: How concerned are you that what we are witnessing now is another Rwanda in the works? From what you have been describing, certainly there's

a lot of similarity with what happened in Rwanda. Are you concerned that this is what we are seeing here unfolding?

SRSG Johnson: First to the latter question, no; this is not a new Rwanda and the reason is there are significant differences between the two situations. In Rwanda we saw government officials deeply involved and instrumental in designing a genocide and they used means to do so – both communications means and other means – mobilising both population but also their own government institutions against one ethnic group.

This is inter-communal violence – unfortunately at scale – but still inter-communal violence. The difference is quite significant and the difference is also significant in relation to the role of the UN. Both the operations of the UN as well as the way we handle the crisis is completely different.

To tackle the question of the image that you asked in relation to that, we are seeing in the way we responded to the crisis a situation where thousands of civilians got out of harm's way. Thousands of civilians – Likuonole has around 40,000 inhabitants; Pibor has about 40,000 inhabitants – in the case of Likuonole, the town was largely empty when the attack happened. With the few vulnerable people that were there, we evacuated. As I said, we could never guarantee in a situation like this that every single person was out but we did evacuate the disabled, the elderly that we found. Secondly in Pibor, the combined efforts of the SPLA who, as I said, opened fire against a column of thousands of armed men, together with the positioning of our APCs [*Armoured Personnel Carriers*], turned the column around. We can just imagine what would have happened if the column had come straight into Pibor town – and there were a number of civilians there. We would have seen a much, much higher number of people killed. So the operations of the Government forces and the Mission saved thousands of people's lives. In my opinion I can hardly see, but people have to judge for themselves, that this implies a tainted image of the Mission.

We can always do more if we have more assets and we can always look at how we could have done things better. But the lessons we learnt from the former mission that had another mandate was to take action early enough. Early warning was put into the mandate of the Mission exactly because one has learnt from the other peacekeeping missions before. UNMISS, I think it's the first time, has an explicit mandate to use early warning as an operational mechanism and that is because one has learnt from previous missions where civilians have not been protected. Before the height of the crisis we did indeed use the early warning mechanism and it did save thousands of peoples' lives. We (inaudible) the number are of those who unfortunately were south of Pibor when the attackers, particularly breakaway factions of the Lou-Nuer moving south to take more cattle, torched *tukuls* and killed people. We have yet to see the numbers of those and every single life that has been lost is deeply regrettable. However, if we had had much more assets, we might have been able to do more. But with the assets that we have – as I mentioned, we deployed 50% of our combat forces to do this operation.

So we have learnt the lessons from other missions; we have learnt the lessons from other missions that have not been able to protect civilians adequately – both for reasons of inadequate mandate and for reasons of inadequate troops on the ground. We have learnt these lessons and we of course also will look at what we did in this operation and look at are there things we could have done better; are there things we could have improved; are there ways and means within which we could have done more. And that is among the things that the Secretary-General has mentioned now pointing out the assets as one of the key gaps that we have and I would underline that that is something that is absolutely needed to address.

I wanted to emphasise that we would review that but the way the operation was carried out has saved thousands of peoples' lives despite the regrettable loss of lives that has happened.

On the question on the Murle and Lou-Nuer attackers, I think it was referring to the attacks in the Dinka and the Lou-Nuer area. Again, (inaudible). We had inadequate numbers of helicopters during the crisis and we still need support. But we don't have them flying everywhere all the time. It is not possible. We do not have that capacity.

In terms of protection, what we can do is to deter attacks but the reason why we are not there at the moment to protect civilians in every village is the characteristics of the attacks. The difference between the Lou-Nuer way of attacking in a big column where there were 7 – 8 thousand, maybe more – I am hearing also higher figures than that – you could see them moving. We had also monitored and recce the area. We could see them moving, we warned the government and we started deploying our troops. It's a very different way of operating than the attacks we now see into the Lou-Nuer and the Dinka areas. These attacks are in smaller groups, speedy, unpredictable, follows no particular pattern. As I mentioned, if we were to predict those, we would be doing miracles because we can not predict exactly which village they are going to attack. So that is the challenge we now have. If the Murle had come in a bigger column that we could watch in the same way as we did the Lou-Nuer column, we could position our troops into populated areas where we see them coming to and would be in a position to do the same as we did in Pibor and Likuangole. However they are not attacking in this way. The attacks are different so it remains to be seen whether there will be a larger column coming but I think that those who are South Sudanese here know that the Murle attacks are different in characteristic than the Lou-Nuer attacks – and that is a matter of tradition. We saw in Pieri that there was a larger column of the Murle attacking a larger area but it remains to be seen whether there is a shift and whether that shift would lead to a different way of attacking.

Now how comes we are arriving as protection to arrive when people are killed; well that is not protection – then we would have to help the wounded. The protection is deterring attacks. That is the protection that we can provide in that context. If we are lucky enough to have detected and to have troops exactly on the location, of course we would protect them physically with our arms. We do have a company in Akobo

for example. If there is an attack in Akobo, we would be in a position to protect those civilians together with the SPLA that has a battalion there. We would then be in a position to coordinate with them and defend with force, with arms, with fire. But to do that in every single location all over the Lou-Nuer and Dinka and Murle areas is not physically possible.

(...)The media bill, we have been working on that and have raised with the Government, publicly as well, when there have been incidents relating to arrest of journalists and closing of papers. This is something we are actively engaged in and is part of the mandate on human rights and the freedom of speech. It is also reflected in the Transitional Constitution of the Republic of the South Sudan and we are actively in that and will continue to do so.

I think that was the last question that I had. Thank you all and you will get the speech on the way out and the figures on the military side.

(Ends)