

**Joint statement by Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and
Emergency Relief Coordinator, Henrietta Fore, UNICEF Executive Director, and
Natalia Kanem, United Nations Population Fund Executive Director**

Statement on the situation in Bentiu, South Sudan

In the past 12 days, more than 150 women and girls have sought assistance after suffering sexual violence, including rape, near Bentiu in South Sudan. We echo the statement of the Secretary-General's Special Representative for South Sudan condemning these abhorrent attacks.

The assailants have been described as armed men, many in uniform. We call on the relevant authorities to publicly denounce the attacks and ensure that those responsible for these crimes face justice. All parties to the conflict must uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law and cease attacks on civilians.

Coming during the international campaign of 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, the attacks remind us that a broad pattern of gender-based violence, including sexual violence, has continued in South Sudan. In the first half of 2018, some 2,300 cases of gender-based violence were reported to service providers, the vast majority perpetrated against women and girls. More than 20 per cent of survivors who have come forward are children. The actual number of cases is far higher, as gender-based violence continues to be severely under-reported.

Humanitarian workers are providing critical, life-saving assistance and services to the survivors of the attacks. We call on the authorities to ensure the protection and safety of both civilians and aid workers, to ensure that further such horrendous violations are prevented and that assistance reaches those in need.

New York, 3 December 2018