UNMISS establishes temporary base to deter road ambushes in Central Equatoria

Juba, 2 September 2020: A temporary peacekeeping base is being established at Lobonok, in the Central Equatorian region of South Sudan, to help deter violence after a surge in armed attacks on civilians and humanitarian convoys.

Yesterday, two civilians were killed and four injured when a vehicle was ambushed by heavily armed men reported to belong to the National Salvation Front on the road between Yei and Lasu. The incident follows similar road-side attacks in the past few days on humanitarian convoys travelling along the Juba-Yei road where people were shot, and trucks were looted and torched.

“We are deeply disturbed by the increase in violent assaults on civilians as well as humanitarians who are working hard to ensure that communities receive the assistance and care they need,” said the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, David Shearer.

“Too help prevent further violence, we have deployed troops to Lobonok this morning to set up a temporary operating base. This will enable us to provide a protective presence in the area. We are also engaging with all parties, including the Government which has primary responsibility for protecting all civilians.”

The surge in violence against civilians follows the killing of six bodyguards working for South Sudan’s Vice President, James Wani Igga, in the Lobonok area in late August. The National Salvation Front (NAS) publicly claimed responsibility for this attack.

“We are greatly concerned by reports of increased NAS movement across the Equatorias and a series of clashes between its members and forces serving with the South Sudan People’s Defense Force and the Sudan People’s Liberation Army in-Opposition,” said David Shearer.

“This violence is causing huge tension in the area and putting the lives of civilians at risk. All parties involved are either signatories to the revitalized peace agreement or the January 2020 Rome Declaration so they should respect the ceasefire, stop the fighting and protect civilians.”

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