



United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)

Spokesperson & Media Relations Unit
Communications & Public Information Section

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Wau could provide “model” for return home of South Sudan’s displaced people

The return of displaced people to their homes in Wau in north-western South Sudan could provide a “model” for other parts of the country, the Head of the UN Peacekeeping Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) has said.

David Shearer, who is also the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, was speaking on a visit to Wau town.

The number of displaced people living in the UNMISS Protection of Civilians (POC) site has fallen from 38,000 to 32,500 over the last two months. Many of those people have returned home to cultivate their land.

“The security situation has improved in recent weeks,” Mr Shearer said. “I am pleased to see that the local authorities, the police and National Security have worked to improve the security environment.”

David Shearer met with the Wau Governor and security officials about cooperation with the UN, humanitarian agencies and importantly the displaced people themselves, to create the enabling conditions to assist people to leave the camps and go home.

“This collaboration could represent a new model for the return of displaced people,” he said.

“It is important that people return to their homes voluntarily,” Mr Shearer added, “and for that to happen they need to feel safe and confident about their future.”

UNMISS has recommended launching night peacekeeping patrols to residential neighbourhoods to provide additional security and boost confidence, a proposal that the State authorities are considering.

“UNMISS and our humanitarian partners both have a role to play in the eventual return of displaced people,” added Mr Shearer. “UNMISS can help by providing a greater sense of security and humanitarian agencies can offer more services outside the protection camps so those people will have more incentives to leave and restart their lives at home.”

In April this year the alleged ambush and killing of a government SPLA General in Wau led to clashes in the town resulting in the deaths of around 30 civilians.

The Special Representative visited the neighbourhood of Lokoloko on the outskirts of Wau where some residents have returned to their houses and started growing food on a small scale.

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