



# United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)

Media & Spokesperson Unit  
Communications & Public Information Office

## PRESS RELEASE

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### UNMISS issues preliminary account of Akobo base attack

The UN Mission in South Sudan condemns in the strongest possible terms the unprovoked attack on its base in the Jonglei state town of Akobo on the afternoon of Thursday, 19 December. Earlier today UNMISS was able to confirm the deaths of two Indian Battalion soldiers, who were killed while defending the base against the assailants. The remains of the deceased were airlifted this morning from Akobo to the UNMISS compound in Malakal in neighboring Upper Nile State and arrived in Juba this afternoon.

A third Indian Army peacekeeper was wounded in the chest during the attack and has been flown by UNMISS aircraft to Malakal, where he is reported to be in stable condition.

All UN personnel who remained overnight in Akobo have been airlifted to Malakal this morning in four UNMISS helicopters along with seven South Sudanese civilians and a dozen staff members of non-governmental organizations.

UNMISS estimates that at least 20 of the civilians who sought refuge inside the base were killed during the attack.

“I deplore this unjustified and unwarranted attack on the United Nations Mission base in Akobo, killing peacekeepers that were here to protect civilians and serve the people of South Sudan. It is a criminal act for which the responsible must be held accountable. Such attacks will not deter us from continuing to discharge our mandate,” said Hilde F. Johnson, Special Representative of the Secretary General.

UNMISS expresses its heartfelt condolences to the families and friends of our fallen colleagues who were deployed in Akobo to help protect South Sudanese civilians and were killed and wounded in action. Operations are underway to evacuate 40 UNMISS peacekeepers from a base in the Jonglei state town of Yuai this afternoon.

#### Chronology of events:

The following is a preliminary chronology of the events compiled by UNMISS. The attack began at approximately 3:45 p.m. on Thursday when an estimated 2,000 armed youths believed to be of Lou Nuer ethnicity surrounded the UNMISS base in Akobo and opened fire in the direction of South Sudanese civilians of Dinka ethnic origin who had sought refuge inside the compound earlier. While trying to open

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negotiations with the assailants, UNMISS peacekeepers stationed inside the compound came under sustained attack.

Following the takeover of the base, the assailants seized weapons, ammunition and other supplies. A coordinated action involving soldiers of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and UNMISS peacekeepers was able to re-establish control over the Mission's base by 6 p.m. on Thursday.

The base remains under the protection and control of SPLA troops. UNMISS continues its efforts to verify the total number of fatalities and whereabouts of the bodies and investigate the sequence of events on 19 December.

A memorial service will be held in the UNMISS compound adjacent to Juba International Airport on Saturday morning, following which the remains will be transported to India.

This senseless act of violence must not go unpunished, and UNMISS will support all efforts to bring the perpetrators of this heinous crime to justice.

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