



United Nations Mission in South Sudan

Press Release

02 December 2018

UNMISS condemns brutal sexual assaults on women and girls near Bentiu

The United Nations Mission in South Sudan has condemned a series of brutal sexual attacks on women and girls travelling from their villages to the town of Bentiu in the Unity region of South Sudan.

Approximately 125 women and girls have sought medical treatment after having been raped or sexually assaulted in a ten-day period as they walked along roads near Nhialdu and Guit on their way to Bentiu. They report the attacks as having been carried out by young men in civilian clothing or military uniforms. In addition to being sexually violated, they were brutally beaten and robbed.

“These attacks on vulnerable civilians are absolutely abhorrent and must stop,” said the Head of UNMISS and Special Representative of the Secretary-General, David Shearer. “The violent assaults happened in a Government-controlled area and it has primary responsibility for the safety of civilians. The Mission has held urgent meetings with authorities and urged them to take immediate action to protect women and girls in the area and to hold the perpetrators of these terrible crimes to account.”

“UNMISS peacekeepers have immediately sent patrols to the area to provide a protective presence and our human rights team has launched an investigation to identify the perpetrators. UNMISS engineers are also clearing foliage from the sides of the road so attackers find it harder to conceal their presence,” said David Shearer.

The Mission is also urging armed forces in the area to guarantee command and control over their troops to ensure rogue elements within their ranks are not involved in these criminal acts,” said David Shearer.

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