



United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)

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UN Security Council Visit to South Sudan

Press conference following Security Council's meeting with President Kiir

Opening Remarks – Foreign Minister Dr. Barbaba Marial Benjamin

On behalf of the President of the Republic of South Sudan and on behalf of the Government and the people of South Sudan, we warmly welcome the visit of the Security Council to the Republic of South Sudan. As you know, the members of the Security Council have just had a brief meeting this morning with the members of the Council of Ministers and of course a lot of discussions were held with regard to the issues of the peace process, the issues of security, the issues of the humanitarian crisis.

We have two ambassadors, the ambassador of the United States, Samantha Power, and we have also the ambassador of Rwanda who was previously president of the Security Council, Eugene Richard, and of course we have also the president of the Security Council, Mark Grant of the United Kingdom. So your excellencies, the people of South Sudan would like to hear why you are here, where you are going to and when will you come back.

Ambassador Eugene Richard

Good afternoon everybody. We are here today as part of our traditional Security Council visits to conflict and post-conflict states. It was important that we visit the Republic of South Sudan this time to express first of all our support to the ongoing IGAD-led political dialogue peace process and tell all parties they should implement agreements they have signed. We totally agree with what the President just told us, that the only solution is goodwill and political dialogue, and the parties must know that the people of South Sudan have suffered enough and the international community will not look on as a seemingly endless situation...

Since our arrival here in Juba this morning, we had two meetings, one with the members of the cabinet and the second one with the President of the Republic. They were good meetings – open, instructive and candid. The Security Council was able to express our deep concern about what is happening in this country, the continued suffering of people. We also listened to the views of the government and also the program which is still continuing in these days ahead. We will now head to Malakal.

Ambassador Samantha Power

The Security Council has come to South Sudan in a spirit of friendship and partnership. The Security Council played a very important role in the run-up to South Sudan's independence, taking

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a very strong stand at a time when the referendum for this country seemed in doubt, when it wasn't clear whether it would go off on time or whether the results would be respected. The Security Council took very strong measures back in the run-up to 2011, in the run-up to the referendum to ensure that the voices and the will of the South Sudanese people were heard.

So we come back to South Sudan now at a time of great peril for the people of this new country. There is a grave risk of famine that now looms, that hangs over this visit. Fifty thousand children under five are at risk of dying by malnutrition in the coming months, and around half of this country's population is facing grave food insecurity.

Moreover, as you all know, the killing is continuing, notwithstanding the fact that a cessation of hostilities has been signed. So far, there has not been near the implementation of that cessation of hostilities that is needed to bring peace and stability to this country and get it back on track.

So this Security Council visit comes in a way as an emergency visit to this country to underscore to the leadership here just how important it is to follow through on the commitments made, to put together a transitional governing body in the run-up to elections.

We will engage Riek Machar as well, probably tomorrow, and we will deliver a very tough message to him as well that the international community will not tolerate violations of the cessation of hostilities and that people who spoil the peace agreement, people who commit gross violations of human rights must be held accountable. That is our message to all parties. We have delivered that message here, we will deliver it to Riek Machar

The last thing I would say is just to again put a sharp point on this: there is no military solution to what ails South Sudan. President Kiir has sent this message, using his voice to send this message. But it is important that all parties live by this message. We hear very worrying reports of more arms being brought into this country in order to set the stage for another battle, another set of battles when the dry season commences.

This is deeply alarming, and so the round of talks now underway in Addis has to be taken seriously by both parties, and there has to be urgency in the manner with which both delegations try to achieve the lasting peace that the people of South Sudan have coveted for so long. With that we'll take your questions.

Voice of America: Now that the deadline for the establishment of a transitional government has already expired three days ago, is there any way that the Security Council will try to see how the two parties should go (forward) with this? And is the Security Council in favor of having more sanctions imposed in case the two parties do not strike a comprehensive deal soon?

Ambassador Power: We are deeply disappointed that the deadline has come and gone. We now have two cessation of hostilities agreements, one the original, the second the reaffirmation, that have gone unheeded and we do not see the urgency that needs to be brought to these negotiations. We are again very disappointed that that deadline has come and gone.

However, we would note that the government and Riek Machar are still in talks. The Council will be seeing the IGAD minister tomorrow that is the foreign ministers representing those countries that have been so active in trying to bring about a peaceful solution. And when it comes to your second question, the Council has made it very clear that it is prepared to impose consequences if

there continue to be spoilers, If there continue to be people carrying out gross violations of human rights.

We seek to coordinate Council action as best we can with those IGAD ministers and that's why one of the additional reasons those meetings tomorrow are so important.

Ambassador Grant: Perhaps just on that last question about consequences, perhaps I could read out a couple of lines from the statement that was agreed by the Security Council only five days ago.

"The Security Council expresses its readiness to consider, in consultation with relevant parties including IGAD and the African Union, all appropriate measures including targeted sanctions against those who take action that undermines the peace, stability and security of South Sudan, including those who prevent the implementation of these agreements."

That is a very clear statement by all 15 members of the Security Council that there will be consequences for those who try to undermine agreements that are reached in the Addis Ababa talks.

Foreign Minister: Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen.