



## DEBATE PACK

Number CDP 2016 - 0240 | 1 December 2016

# Humanitarian situation in South Sudan

**Westminster Hall**

**Wednesday 7 December 2016**

**2:30pm – 4:00pm**

**Debate initiated by Mark Durkan**

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# 1. Summary

According to the latest [Humanitarian Bulletin](#) on South Sudan (21 November 2016) by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the humanitarian situation today is dire.

Close to three million South Sudanese have had to flee their homes since civil war broke out in December 2013. An estimated 1.87 million people have been internally displaced and over a million people are refugees in neighbouring countries. A fragile peace process collapsed in July 2016, triggering another upsurge in fighting, with Western, Central and Eastern Equatoria particularly severely affected. Also badly hit has been Unity State. Humanitarian organisations have been scaling-up their response. There are warnings of unprecedented levels of food insecurity in early 2017. An estimated 4.8 million people were food insecure in July 2016. There has also been an outbreak of cholera. OCHA's head of operations recently said: "The gravity of the situation that the people of South Sudan face cannot be overstated."

Meanwhile, amidst warnings of the possibility of genocide, the UN Security Council has authorised the deployment of a 4,000-strong 'Regional Protection Force' of East African troops to assist the beleaguered and much-criticised UN mission there. After a long period of hesitation, the South Sudanese Government has [agreed](#) to cooperate with the force, but it is not yet on the ground. Discussions continue within the Council about increasing sanctions against senior government officials believed to have obstructed peace efforts and imposing an arms embargo. The UK supports doing both. But Russia and China remain highly reluctant to support such measures. A resolution has yet to be formally tabled.

## 2. Press Articles

Mail Online

**'I've seen things that will stay with me forever': Tom Hiddleston reveals 'heartbreak' as he returns to South Sudan as UNICEF ambassador to witness impact of civil war on children**

Tom Hiddleston  
30 November 2016

The Independent

**Japan deploys troops overseas for first time since World War II**

Samuel Osborne  
22 November 2016

The Guardian

**One in five people in cities worldwide live in areas with no safe toilet**

Karen McVeigh  
18 November 2016

The Guardian

**'Very real risk' of South Sudan atrocities, UN secretary general warns**

Agence France-Presse at the United Nations  
16 November 2016

The Guardian

**People in war zones feel needs not being met by humanitarian organisations**

Ben Quinn  
10 November 2016

The Guardian

**Gunman in South Sudan kills 13 people watching football match in bar**

Agence France-Presse in Juba  
7 November 2016

The Guardian

**South Sudan peacekeeping commander sacked over 'serious shortcomings'**

Ben Quinn  
2 November 2016

BBC New Online

**South Sudan: 145 child soldiers released - Unicef**

26 October 2016

The Guardian

**UN peacekeepers refused to help as aid workers were raped in South Sudan – report**

6 October 2016

Financial Times

**South Sudan risks return to civil war as officials hit at Machar**

John Aglionby  
28 September

Financial Times

**South Sudan to receive £103m extra UK aid to fight refugee crisis**

23 September 2016  
John Aglionby

Financial Times

**More than 1m people flee South Sudan**

16 September 2016  
John Aglionby

The Times

**Children of 12 forced to battle front as South Sudan veers towards civil war**

Jerome Starkey  
20 August 2016

The Independent

**South Sudan conflict: Mothers 'are so hungry they cannot breastfeed their babies'**

Kevin Sieff  
6 August 2016

The Guardian

**'I begged them to kill me instead': women in South Sudan raped under nose of UN**

Simona Foltyn  
29 July 2016

The Times

**270 killed in battle for South Sudan's capital**

Stuart Graham  
11 July 2016

### 3. PQs

#### **South Sudan: Genocide**

**29 Nov 2016 | HL3356**

**Asked by: Lord St John of Bletso**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of the publication on 15 November of the Interim Report of the UN panel of experts on South Sudan, what measures are being taken to avert the threat of genocide in South Sudan.

**Answering member: Baroness Anelay of St Johns | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

We are deeply concerned by the ongoing violence in South Sudan and agree with the United Nations Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide that the international community needs to act fast before genocide becomes a reality. Together with our regional and international partners, we continue to press both the government of South Sudan and the Opposition to show restraint and work to build peace through an inclusive political process. In parallel, as we have consistently made clear, we fully support a United Nations arms embargo on South Sudan and will continue to push for this in Security Council discussions in New York.

#### **UN Mission in South Sudan**

**28 Nov 2016 | 54062**

**Asked by: Imran Hussain**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he or the UK representative to the UN have made to other UN Security Council member states on the extension of the UN mission in South Sudan.

**Answering member: Tobias Ellwood | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The mandate for the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) was extended for four months on 12 August, following extensive discussions in the UN Security Council. The effectiveness of the mission is reviewed monthly by Security Council members during consultations, which involve extensive discussions with all other members of the Council, and the mandate is due for renewal on 15 December. The UK Permanent Representative to the UN represents the UK Government during these discussions.

#### **South Sudan: Armed Conflict**

**28 Nov 2016 | 54061**

**Asked by: Imran Hussain**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had on the situation in South Sudan with

member states of the African Union and representatives from the African Union.

**Answering member: Tobias Ellwood | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

We regularly discuss South Sudan with senior African Union Commission (AUC) officials in Addis Ababa and Juba and raise it regularly with individual African Union Member States on a bilateral basis, including at the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission Partners meeting in Kampala on 10 November. Most recently, our Ambassador to South Sudan met with the AU Special Representative for South Sudan in Juba on 20 November, while our Ambassador to Ethiopia and UK Permanent Representative to the African Union met the AUC Commissioner for Peace and Security on 21 October and raised South Sudan with him then.

**South Sudan: Migrant Workers**  
**28 Nov 2016 | 54060**

**Asked by: Imran Hussain**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his counterpart in South Sudan on that country's restriction of employment of non-South Sudanese nationals by non-governmental organisations and other organisations.

**Answering member: Tobias Ellwood | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are playing a vital part in providing lifesaving humanitarian support in South Sudan. The Department for International Development Director for East Africa met with the Minister for Humanitarian Affairs on 22 October to discuss the South Sudanese NGO Bill and to ensure that its implementation was not hindering NGOs in providing vital services. We are watching this situation closely, and are in dialogue with NGO forums and the partners that we fund directly.

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**South Sudan: Internally Displaced People**  
**28 Nov 2016 | 54051**

**Asked by: Imran Hussain**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what support her Department is providing to help support internally displaced South Sudanese refugees.

**Answering member: James Wharton | Department for International Development**

The UK is the second largest bilateral donor to the humanitarian response in South Sudan. We expect to provide assistance to 3 million people between 2015 and 2020, the majority of whom are internally displaced people, but also those living in the host communities supporting them. Our support will include life-saving food and clean drinking water as well as sanitation, shelter and health care.

**South Sudan: Food**  
**28 Nov 2016 | 54050**

**Asked by: Imran Hussain**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what support her Department is providing to help to support food-insecure people in South Sudan.

**Answering member: James Wharton | Department for International Development**

Due to the severity and protracted nature of the food security crisis in South Sudan, DFID has signed multi-year agreements with the World Food Programme and the International Committee of the Red Cross. This is a cost-effective way of providing emergency food assistance which allows us to reach more people. This year, UK funds have supported between 1.3 and 1.9 million people per month. The UK will continue to be vocal in lobbying the Government of South Sudan and others on facilitating humanitarian access for aid agencies.

**South Sudan: Food**  
**28 Nov 2016 | 54048**

**Asked by: Imran Hussain**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his counterpart in South Sudan on stopping armed forces destroying food reserves and restricting access to food for civilians in that country.

**Answering member: Tobias Ellwood | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

We continually make clear to both the government of South Sudan and the Opposition that disrupting the efforts of humanitarian agencies to provide food for civilians in desperate need of assistance is absolutely unacceptable. In particular, the government must fulfil its commitment to improve access for humanitarian personnel to those who need our support. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Africa Director raised this issue with the First Vice President on 23 November. We also raise humanitarian issues alongside other donors with representatives of the Government in the context of discussions about the peace process, organised by the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Committee in Juba, most recently on 22 November.

**South Sudan: Cholera**  
**28 Nov 2016 | 54049**

**Asked by: Imran Hussain**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what support her Department is providing to help combat cholera outbreaks in South Sudan.

**Answering member: James Wharton | Department for International Development**

DFID is the lead donor to the multi-donor Health Pooled Fund (HPF) in South Sudan which provides primary health services through over 1,000 health facilities in eight of the 10 states in South Sudan. The HPF has supported the cholera outbreak response through the provision of essential medicines, supplies and by setting up cholera treatment centres in the affected states.

**Kenya: UN Mission in South Sudan**  
**16 Nov 2016 | 52534**

**Asked by: Hussain, Imran**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had on the withdrawal of Kenyan forces from the UN Mission in South Sudan with his counterparts in all the member states participating in that Mission.

**Answering member: Tobias Ellwood | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

We are concerned that a number of Kenyan troops have already been withdrawn from the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). The UK High Commissioner in Nairobi raised these concerns directly with the Kenyan Principal Secretary for Foreign Affairs on 8 November and emphasised the important role Kenya has to play in resolving the crisis in South Sudan and in providing security to ordinary South Sudanese through their participation in the peacekeeping force. The UK Special Representative for Sudan and South Sudan discussed this issue with regional partners on 10 November in Kampala and our Mission to the UN in New York has discussed this with other Security Council Members

and troop contributing countries. We understand that UNMISS are now looking at contingency plans.

### **South Sudan: Peacekeeping Operations**

**24 Oct 2016 | HL2252**

#### **Asked by: Baroness Kinnock of Holyhead**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their response to the evidence provided by the UN Secretary General which points out that the government of South Sudan is regularly undermining the UN Security Council decision to deploy an additional 4,000 peacekeepers.

#### **Answering member: Baroness Anelay of St Johns | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

We have consistently lobbied the Government of South Sudan, both bilaterally and through the UN Security Council, to cooperate fully with the planning for the Regional Protection Force (RPF) due to be deployed to Juba to support the operations of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), most recently when our Ambassador met President Kiir in Juba on 13 October. We are exploring, with our partners on the Security Council, additional measures that might be taken to ensure that UNMISS is able properly to fulfil its mandate and the RPF is able to deploy.

### **Sub-Saharan Africa: Politics and Government**

**17 Oct 2016 | 47449**

#### **Asked by: Paul Monaghan**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what diplomatic steps he is taking to address the humanitarian crisis in sub-Saharan Africa.

#### **Answering member: Tobias Ellwood | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

Her Majesty's Government is committed to addressing humanitarian crises in Africa through a number of means, including working bilaterally with African countries and through supporting multilateral bodies such as the European Union, United Nations, the International Financial Institutions and the African Union. The UK is also a leading donor in responding to crisis in the region; last year the Department for International Development spent £522m on humanitarian assistance across Africa, including South Sudan, Nigeria and in response to El Nino effects in Ethiopia and Southern Africa.

We also remain an active partner of the African Union, supporting the organisation to deliver its responsibility for peace and security on the continent, and in its role as the first responder to crisis. In addition, Ministerial colleagues and I undertake regular visits to the region where prevention and responses to humanitarian crises are frequently discussed.

### **South Sudan: Arms Trade**

**11 Oct 2016 | 46683**

**Asked by: Tom Brake**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policy of the UN Secretary-General's statement of 11 July 2016 on events in South Sudan; and whether the Government supports calls for an arms embargo to that country and the strengthening of the UN mission in South Sudan in the light of its response to those events.

**Answering member: Tobias Ellwood | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

We welcomed the statement made by the UN Secretary-General on the situation in South Sudan. Our policy continues to be focussed on helping to protect the people of South Sudan and we are in support of an arms embargo as a means to support this. We lobbied hard to strengthen the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and supported UN Security Council Resolution 2304, adopted on 12 August, which mandated a regional protection force of up to 4000 additional troops to robustly protect civilians and key humanitarian transit routes in Juba. In addition, the Secretary of State for Defence, Rt Hon the member for Sevenoaks (Michael Fallon) announced on 8 September that the number of UK troops to be deployed within UNMISS will be increased to close to 400 in order to support the mission's operations.

**South Sudan: Conflict, Stability and Security Fund  
22 Sep 2016 | HL1727**

**Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool**

To ask Her Majesty's Government which projects funded by the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund in South Sudan in 2016–17 are directly linked to the implementation of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan.

**Answering member: Baroness Anelay of St Johns | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) in South Sudan will provide funding for five projects in 2016-17 that seek to reduce conflict at a national and local level, and are therefore directly linked to the implementation of the peace agreement. These projects will help improve public knowledge of the peace agreement, increase the capacity for HMG to engage with implementation, provide technical assistance on the economy and security sectors, and support the Sudan People's Liberation Army on professionalisation, implementation of the peace agreement and preventing sexual violence in conflict.

**South Sudan: Overseas Aid  
19 Sep 2016 | HL1728**

**Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much development aid has been provided to South Sudan in each of the last three years, and how much

of that aid was specifically focused on conflict resolution and promoting reconciliation.

**Answering member: Baroness Anelay of St Johns | Department for International Development**

Through DFID the UK provided £158m in 2013/14 and £188m in 2015/16 of development aid to South Sudan, a further £165 million is budgeted to be spent this financial year.

The UK remains committed to helping bring an end to the cycle of violence in South Sudan. Many of our programmes have components aimed at conflict resolution and reconciliation. In terms of specific programming, a £12 million 'Community Security and Arms Control' project running from 2012-16 helps to control and regulate small arms, enhance dispute resolution mechanisms and improve security within communities. In addition, through the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) the UK spent almost £1.4 million on conflict resolution and promoting reconciliation in 2015/16, and is forecasting to spend a further £1 million in 2016/17, including on community level peacebuilding and the Conflict Sensitivity Programme. DFID works very closely with the FCO, who, along with 'Troika' partners the US and Norway, are working to help end the conflict through the implementation of the 2015 peace agreement.

**South Sudan: Humanitarian Aid  
19 Sep 2016 | HL1672**

**Asked by: The Earl of Sandwich**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the reported attacks on aid workers in Juba in July on (1) the longer-term presence of UK non-governmental organisations in South Sudan, and (2) the UK's future relations with the government of South Sudan.

**Answering member: Baroness Anelay of St Johns | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The welfare of British Nationals in South Sudan is a top priority for our Embassy in Juba. We have advised our citizens to leave but we recognise that some of those working in non-governmental organisations have decided to stay and will continue to provide assistance to them. The reinforced mandate of the UN Mission in South Sudan, including the arrival of a Regional Protection Force in Juba, is designed to provide greater protection for the civilian population, as well as humanitarian agencies and non-governmental organisations. We will continue to lobby the government of South Sudan to allow the mission to operate effectively.

**Aid Budget: Value for Money  
14 Sep 2016 | 614 c884**

**Asked by: Stephen Doughty**

The Secretary of State has clearly been very busy briefing The Mail on Sunday, along with her anti-aid special adviser. She mentioned transparency, so can she explain why funding for South Sudan, an area

of great interest not only to our security forces but to our development needs, is to receive a cut in its budget next year from her Department? Will she continue to fund crucial humanitarian causes such as that one?

**Answered by: Priti Patel | Department for International Development**

I hope, Mr Speaker, that the hon. Gentleman heard my words earlier about the tremendous work of our Department when it comes to humanitarian aid, support and saving lives. The hon. Gentleman is absolutely right: we will continue to champion those individuals whose lives need saving where support is required in many countries around the world. That includes a lot of the institutional reform and the support that we bring.

**South Sudan: Overseas Aid  
12 Sep 2016 | 45119**

**Asked by: Stephen Doughty**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, with reference to page 135 of her Department's Annual Reports and Accounts 2015-16, for what reasons the budget allocation to South Sudan has decreased from £188,184 in 2015-16 to £145,000 in 2017-18.

**Answering member: James Wharton | Department for International Development**

DFID's allocations are continually reviewed to ensure development assistance is used most effectively to achieve poverty reduction, in the national interest and responds to changing needs. The precise way in which DFID spends will reflect changing demands while at the same time protecting ministerial spending commitments.

**South Sudan: Armed Conflict  
09 Sep 2016 | 44783**

**Asked by: Mark Durkan**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment she has made of the humanitarian situation in South Sudan; what estimate she has made of the number of (a) refugees, (b) displaced people and (c) people with severe malnutrition in that country.

**Answering member: James Wharton | Department for International Development**

The humanitarian situation in South Sudan remains dire. More than 2.4 million people are displaced; over 785,000 of them to neighbouring countries as refugees. 4.8 million South Sudanese people, almost half of the population, are at risk of severe food insecurity. Although famine has not yet been declared, there is a looming risk in parts of Unity State. Through DFID, the UK remains the second largest bilateral donor to South Sudan.

**South Sudan: Peace Negotiations**

**08 Aug 2016 | HL1227**

**Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of South Sudan's first Vice President Riek Machar's control over his military forces; what steps they are taking to include all parties in a resolution to the conflict including the Sudan People's Liberation Army's Chief of General Staff Paul Malong; and what steps they are taking to help resolve the delay of payments to soldiers.

**Answering member: Baroness Anelay of St Johns | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The security situation remains fluid, but several opposition commanders have made clear that they remain under the command of Riek Machar. It is therefore imperative that Machar, as well as other South Sudanese leaders, takes responsibility for his forces' actions and refuses to engage in further fighting. Through the UN Security Council and our engagement with regional partners we continue to put pressure on the parties to immediately bring an end to the violence, and to ensure their troops respect the ceasefire of 11 July. Payments to soldiers is a matter for the transitional government of national unity.

## 4. Gov.uk

### **"South Sudan is deteriorating before our very eyes." [Speech]**

Foreign and Commonwealth office

17 November 2016

Statement by Ambassador Matthew Rycroft, UK Permanent Representative to the United Nations, on South Sudan

Thank you Mr. President and thank you to the briefers. I would like to begin by paying particular tribute to Special Representative Ellen Løj for leading the UN Mission in South Sudan through an extremely difficult period.

As all three briefers have made so painfully clear, South Sudan is deteriorating before our very eyes. Ethnic tensions have reached breaking point; the humanitarian situation now rivals the worst on the African continent; and the political talks that could have brought peace to millions now appear to be further from success than at any point in the country's brief history.

We just cannot stay silent in the face such tragedy. Here are the three things that we need to do to help the people of South Sudan.

First and foremost, we need to recognise that this is no ordinary civil war. Adama Dieng just said, 'Genocides do not happen overnight. The warning signs are there'. That should play over and over in our minds. He is telling us to open our eyes; he is telling us to act before it is too late. If we fail to do so, the consequences will be unspeakable. Just think, if that horrific process, if that tragedy, were to become a reality, how could we sit around this table and ask- 'what could we have done?' Instead, today, we need to choose to take a different path.

Which brings me to my second point. On the eve of South Sudan's independence, we adopted unanimously a resolution that authorised the creation of UNMISS. Since that day, South Sudan has landed on this Council's agenda 70 times. 70 times. And on how many of those occasions has this Council spoken with one voice? Is it not time for us to unite to give the people of South Sudan hope?

I know the United Kingdom is willing to do so. I know that the UK can, must, play a greater, even more significant part in that effort as a member of the Troika and as a bilateral partner. But this effort extends beyond any single government, in fact beyond the confines of this chamber. We need a truly global effort. One that includes the members of IGAD, the African Union, the UN and especially requires the political will, the political courage, of South Sudan's leaders. They must admit to the scale of the problem and commit to being a part of an inclusive and peaceful political solution.

My third point is that we already know the steps that need to be taken, an immediate end to the fighting, an immediate end to obstructions on UNMISS, the Regional Protection force and humanitarians, an

immediate end to hate speech and incitement, and a re-doubling of collective political effort behind an inclusive political conversation.

The situation in South Sudan described today is dark. It is grim. But make no mistake, as Ellen said, it can get darker. And for this reason, we need to listen to Adama and use the tools that we have to prevent that from happening. I agree with all of Adama's proposals and that includes his point that it is urgent for the Security Council to impose an arms embargo. The United Kingdom has consistently called for this, and we support the United States' proposal. We cannot stand idly by while the people of South Sudan have weapons used against them by their fellow citizens.

There is no reason, given these conditions, to allow the continued flow of weapons to those who could eventually turn them on civilians.

Let me tackle concerns about an arms embargo head on. First, an arms embargo is no longer a matter of political leverage. We have other tools. Cooperation around a political process, and stopping the flow of arms are not mutually exclusive.

Second, we know that an arms embargo can be implemented because of the limited infrastructure in South Sudan – only one main tarmac road and only four main airports.

Third, we know that with an embargo operation of heavy weaponry will be limited and the flow of ammunition will reduce. So we know that an embargo will have an impact in the short, medium and long term. We know all of the answers to all of those questions and we know that stopping these weapons will be a step in the right direction in this matter of life and death.

Mr President, no matter how dark the situation is in South Sudan, as I said it can get worse, but it can also get better, provided we take action. So let us act collectively, and with authority, wisely using the tools at our disposal to get where we are all aiming, namely sustainable peace and freedom from fear for the people of South Sudan.

Thank you.

### **UK bolsters support to peacekeeping in South Sudan**

Ministry of Defence  
8 September 2016

Up to one hundred extra UK Armed Forces personnel are to join UN peacekeeping work in South Sudan, adding to 300 announced under the previous Government.

Speaking at the UK-hosted UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial in London, Defence Secretary Michael Fallon announced that the troops will deploy to South Sudan to boost support to the UN Mission in the country.

Once in country the deployment will more than double the UK's global peacekeeping efforts.

The additional UK personnel will enable the provision of a field hospital, supporting deployed UK and other UN peacekeepers.

The announcement comes as the Defence Secretary today welcomed representatives from 80 nations to London to discuss peacekeeping commitments.

Defence Secretary Michael Fallon said:

This large scale deployment underlines how we are stepping up our global commitments.

Backed by a rising defence budget, it's part of our effort to tackle the instability that leads to mass migration and terrorism. It will help keep Britain safe while improving lives abroad.

The recent UK role in South Sudan has involved vital engineering work to strengthen infrastructure – provided by two engineer squadron groups – and is in addition to longstanding advisory support to the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) headquarters.

The first UK personnel [arrived](#) in June, and the main body deployment is expected in country next year.

Separately to this contribution to UNMISS, the UK is also backing a UN mission in Somalia to ensure security against the threat of terrorism. Around 40 UK troops have already [deployed](#) to join UN support to the Africa Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), which is working to build stability and help neutralise the threat posed by Al-Shabaab extremists. This number can rise up to 70 to accommodate Short Term Training Teams. The doubling of UK support to UN operations, coupled with today's UK-hosted Defence Ministerial, underlines the UK's leading role in peacekeeping.

The ministerial included discussion on a number of key areas, including how peacekeeping missions can be better planned, building on pledges made at last year's UNGA Peacekeeping Summit, and ensuring effective performance of support to UN operations.

The UK also demonstrates leadership in peacekeeping by driving the debate on peacekeeping reform as a permanent membership of the UN Security Council, and by making substantial assessed financial contributions to the peacekeeping budget.

Britain's longstanding support to UN peacekeeping includes an enduring footprint in Cyprus, as well as UN staff officers in other missions elsewhere in the world, meaning the UK Armed Forces has valuable experience working in varied and often difficult environments.

### **South Sudan - Human Rights Priority Country**

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

21 July 2016

The human rights situation in South Sudan deteriorated further during 2015. Both government and opposition forces continued to breach previous commitments to end hostilities, and widespread fighting resumed in April and May. While a peace agreement was signed in August, serious human rights violations and abuses, and breaches of international humanitarian law continued to be recorded, the majority of which were reportedly committed by government-backed forces. Sexual violence remained a significant concern and was reported in areas previously unaffected by conflict in the south. Gang rapes coupled with beatings and abductions of women were reportedly perpetrated by government-backed forces. Despite international pressure, there was little or no follow-up on long-awaited government investigations into human rights violations and abuses. The rights of the child continued to be violated with reports indicating the use of child soldiers by both sides.

The African Union Commission of Inquiry (AU-COI) report was published in October and found that there were reasonable grounds to believe that crimes against humanity and war crimes had been committed by all sides. A mission by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights undertook a comprehensive assessment of the situation and reported sexual violence had taken place throughout 2015. Civil and political space was severely restricted. The 2014 Security Bill gave the National Security Services enhanced powers to arrest and detain. Arrests, beatings and assaults on journalists and the closure of newspapers were reported throughout the year.

The UK's key human rights objectives in 2015 centred on conflict prevention, preventing sexual violence, and protecting political space. We took action in all these areas during the year. We played a significant and sustained role in helping to secure the peace agreement and continued to lobby both sides to advance implementation. With our Troika partners (the United States and Norway) we encouraged publication of the AU-COI report and have been active in calling for follow-up. South Sudan remained a priority country for the UK's Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative (PSVI). We provided support at the grassroots level, as well as pressing the government to fulfil the commitments it had made in the 2014 Joint UN Communiqué on the Prevention of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence. Internationally, we successfully pressed for a strong resolution on South Sudan at the UN Human Rights Council (HRC). The Prime Minister also announced the UK would send up to 300 troops to South Sudan to support the UN peacekeeping mission.

Our priorities in 2016 will be to ensure the peace agreement is implemented, starting with the formation of the Transitional Government of National Unity. We will continue to press for action on human rights, support human rights organisations, and take a lead on PSVI. We will encourage the AU to establish the Hybrid Court for South

Sudan so that perpetrators of abuses can be held to account. At the HRC we will press for a UN Special Rapporteur to be appointed.

## 5. Further reading

**War and peace in South Sudan: March 2016 update**, Commons Library Briefing Paper CBP-7532, 14 March 2016

**Under Fire: The July 2016 Violence in Juba and UN Response – Report**, Centre for Civilians in Conflict, 5 October 2016

**South Sudan Situation Report**, UNICEF, 14 November 2016

**South Sudan Latest Report: 1 April to 3 June**, UNMISS - United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan, 20 June 2016

**UN Security Council Resolution on South Sudan**, UNMISS, 12 August 2016

### **More UNMISS resources**

**South Sudan - Human Rights Priority Country**, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 21 July 2016

**South Sudan: The Untold Story from Independence to Civil War** by Hilde F Johnson, IB Tauris, 29 Jun 2016

**Report: South Sudan 2015/2016**, Amnesty International, 23 February 2016

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