



# United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)

Media & Spokesperson Unit  
Communications & Public Information Office

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **UNMISS denies accusations of ethnic bias in protection-of-civilians sites**

The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) wishes to correct factual errors and categorically refute allegations of ethnic bias and political favoritism contained in an article in today's edition of The Juba Telegraph newspaper.

The article quoted an internally displaced person (IDP) at the Mission's protection-of-civilians (PoC) site in Malakal, Upper Nile state who accused UNMISS peacekeepers of standing by idly while shots were fired into the PoC site in the late afternoon of 2 July. The shooting incident, which actually took place on Wednesday 1 July, claimed the life of one IDP and left another six IDPs wounded.

According to the article's unnamed source, UNMISS personnel recovered the body of the slain IDP but took no measures to attend to the wounded residents of the PoC site. In fact, all of the wounded IDPs were rushed to the UNMISS hospital in Malakal and a clinic operated by the non-governmental organization Medecins sans Frontieres at the Mission's compound to receive immediate medical attention. UNMISS peacekeepers also returned fire against suspected members of the armed opposition forces who shot into the PoC site on Wednesday afternoon.


The article goes on to accuse UNMISS of being "extremely biased towards certain ethnic members of South Sudan" and "has effectively become a political organisation."

The Mission has scrupulously observed a policy of impartiality since its inception in July 2011. Since the current conflict in South Sudan began in December 2013, UNMISS has provided protection to all unarmed civilians facing a threat of physical violence, regardless of their ethnic background, religious beliefs or political affiliation, and it is currently sheltering over 142,000 IDPs nationwide.

The PoC site in Malakal that is the focus of the Juba Telegraph article is sheltering IDPs from a variety of ethnic groups. UNMISS has consistently supported UN agencies and humanitarian partners in their efforts to provide food, water, sanitation facilities and other vital necessities to IDPs regardless of their ethnic background, and it will continue to do so in compliance with its mandate.

UNMISS once again calls on all media outlets to refrain from disseminating baseless accusations and disinformation that only serve to polarize South Sudanese society along ethnic lines.

For further information or media enquiries,  
Acting Spokesperson: Joseph Contreras - [contrerasj@un.org](mailto:contrerasj@un.org) +211 912 1788 39

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United Nations Mission in South Sudan – Communications & Public Information Office

[www.unmiss.unmissions.org](http://www.unmiss.unmissions.org)

UN House P.O. Box 29, Juba, South Sudan