EMERGENCY RELIEF COORDINATOR AND UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS, VALERIE AMOS

STATEMENT ON SOUTH SUDAN

(New York, 27 February 2014) I am deeply concerned by the grave humanitarian situation in South Sudan, where, despite the recent ceasefire agreement, the lives of millions of civilians are threatened by lack of food, outbreaks of disease, and continued violence.

Malakal, a city in Upper Nile State that I visited just a month ago, saw shocking violence and human rights abuses last week. More than 100 people were reported killed and injured, some of them attacked in the hospitals and churches, places of sanctuary, where they had sought refuge. The situation remains tense, with bodies left on the streets and over 20,000 people sheltering at the UN base. Civilians and local aid workers fear for their lives.

Across South Sudan, more than 900,000 people have been forced from their homes, some 190,000 of them fleeing into neighbouring countries. The situation remains tense in other parts of the country, including Bentiu and Leer, and the fear of violence is preventing families from tending their crops or livestock. 3.7 million people are now short of food.

All those who continue fighting in South Sudan must abide by their obligations under International Humanitarian and Human Rights laws: to protect civilians, to respect the ceasefire, to stop targeting civilian facilities, and to allow safe access for aid workers.

The United Nations and our humanitarian partners will continue to do our best to help the women, children and men of South Sudan to survive this crisis, despite the ongoing fighting and funding constraints.

The people of South Sudan want peace and stability and they want this conflict to end. I hope the fighters will put the people first and stop the unspeakable violence being meted out to ordinary women, children and men.

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