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Statement by Adama Dieng, United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide on the situation in South Sudan

(New York, 11 July 2016) The United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Adama Dieng, expressed his deep concern at the threat to the populations of South Sudan posed by the renewed fighting of the last few days between forces loyal to President Salva Kiir and those loyal to First Vice President Riek Machar.

“Several hundred people have already been killed, including civilians seeking refuge. Some of the civilians killed were reportedly targeted based on their ethnicity. I echo the words of the Secretary-General, who called on President Kiir and First Vice-President Machar to do everything in their power to de-escalate hostilities immediately and ensure the withdrawal of their forces to their bases. If they fail to do so, South Sudan could be plunged back into civil war, at unimaginable human cost.”

Special Adviser Dieng reminded the Transitional Government of National Unity of its responsibility to protect its populations, irrespective of their ethnicity or political affiliation

He also stressed the urgent need to end impunity in South Sudan and bring to justice all those responsible for violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. Special Adviser Dieng called on the Transitional Government to implement Chapter V of the 2015 Peace Agreement, in which the signatories agreed to establish a hybrid court to prosecute cases of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, as well as other serious crimes under international law, and a commission for truth, healing and reconciliation. “It would be a mistake to think that peace, reconciliation and national healing can be achieved in South Sudan without any accountability for the crimes committed”, he commented. “Amnesty is not an option. Those who oppose accountability could be seen as abetting the atrocities committed in South Sudan by protecting the perpetrators.”

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