



United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)

Media & Spokesperson Unit
Communications & Public Information Office

MEDIA MONITORING REPORT

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Highlights

Son of ex-police chief brutally killed in Juba

Sudantribune.com Juba, 2/12/2013 – A son of the former Inspector General of South Sudan police, Achuil Tito Madut, was found dead on Saturday morning in the center of the South Sudanese capital, Juba.

Mustafa Achuil Tito was reportedly shot dead and later on locked into his own Land Cruiser vehicle and burned as the car was set ablaze by the assailant(s).

Late Mustafa was a police officer and was deployed at the Juba International airport as a customs officer.

His father was the top police chief for the country until the recent July reshuffle which replaced him with the current Inspector General, Ping Deng Kuol. He is however reappointed a minister in the Warrap state cabinet from where he hails.

Juba is known for continuous crimes being perpetrated by criminals with many night murders going unnoticed.

Nobody was arrested yet for the brutal murder but the police leadership issued a statement promising to investigate the incident, hunt down the killers and bring them to justice. ([Back to Top](#))

Former rebels' promotions cause tension in South Sudan military

Sudantribune.com Juba, 2/12/2013 – South Sudan appears to be split over the integration of former rebel groups in the young nation's military, after President Salva Kiir appointed prominent rebel leaders to senior positions last week.

Following months of negotiations Kiir appointed the leaders of a series of rebel groups from various locations - mainly the Greater Upper Nile region - into the regular army last week.

Kiir made Bapiny Monytil a lieutenant General and Johnson Uliny, with four other colleagues, Major Generals, while ordering the full integration of them and their forces. In the same order on Monday 25 November Kiir named six other brigadier generals.

Another order was issued on Friday 29 November, integrating Gabriel Tanginye as a Major General and Thomas Mabor Dhol as a Brigadier General. Gatwec Joak was made a Colonel.

The move has drawn widespread opposition from within the army and the general public, with some senior officers questioning the army is serious about security sector reform.

Nonetheless many South Sudanese do not approve of such pragmatism, with some arguing that such appointments encourage rebellions.

Sabit Marier, a member of the ruling SPLM - the political wing of the SPLA during the two decade civil war - said on Sunday that the rebels had achieved nothing apart from the "killing their own people".

Rather than being offered senior military posts, he argued, the rebel leaders "should be held responsible for all the atrocities they committed" and not be rewarded.

"This action of the president will encourage more rebellion", Marier said.

Marier said the recent decision of the president goes against Kiir's policy of lean government integrating the rebel forces will greatly increase the size of the armed forces.

Many SPLA generals were retired earlier this year as Kiir attempted to trim the size of the military to save money during an oil transit fee dispute with Sudan that was crippling South Sudan's economy.

Increasing the size of the SPLA, Marier said, will affect the national budget as more will be spent on soldier's salaries rather than providing institutions with funds to deliver services.

A senior military officer, who wished to remain anonymous, said that some soldiers have registered repeated complaints about lack the lack of promotions from within the ranks.

"Sometimes it makes difficult for us in the command to convince junior officers and non-commission officers because, according to the conventional system, junior officers move faster than senior officers. It takes three to four years for officers with the ranks of lieutenants and captains and about six to eight years for major and lieutenant colonels to go to the other ranks but it has taken long time. We have groups of officers and soldiers waiting commissioning and promotions", he said.

Another officer said that although Kiir, as the SPLA's commander in chief, was acting within his powers and mandate to promote peace and defend the country's sovereignty and security, he felt that there could have been a better balance of promotions from within the SPLA and from the ranks of the former rebels.

"Current ranks are seen as source of money instead of the value of service to the country. I tell you that most of the current commanders cannot run a company when given [an] assignment. Some of them desert assignments during operations pretending that they are sick", an officer who did not want to be identified told Sudan Tribune on Sunday.

"So why not commission long serving non-commission officers and young officers who have demonstrated ability?" he asked. ([Back to Top](#))

President's son served in South Sudan

Ulaanbaatar /MONTSAME, 2/12/2013 – The President's son E.Erdene served in the Republic of South Sudan at the United Nations Mission together with 850 Mongolian peacekeepers from March 4 to November 27 of 2013.

More than 200 peacekeepers of the second contingent returned home last Saturday after the nine-month operations in the country. Upon arriving, they were granted state prizes by Ts.Elbegdorj, the President and Commander-in-Chief of Mongolia's Armed Forces.

Information about Erdene in Sudan was not sounded in view of security matters.

A medical doctor by profession, E.Erdene received the Medal for Peace from his father Mr Elbegdorj at the ceremony held in the "Chingis Khaan" international airport.

While some high officials try to send their children to famous foreign universities, a military service of the President's son in a world hot spot is the first case in Mongolia.

The State Head Elbegdorj also served in the military service, working as a correspondent of the "Ulaan Od" newspaper that used to be functioned by the Armed Forces. ([Back to Top](#))

S. Sudan interior minister doubts UNMISS peacekeeper's role in Jonglei State

Gurtong.net Juba, 2/12/2013 – South Sudan Interior Minister Aleu Ayieny Aleu has expressed dissatisfaction on the role played by the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) peacekeepers in Jonglei, accusing the mission of not doing its work.

"I don't know what the UNMISS is doing in Jonglei," Aleu questioned as he spoke to delegates at the Governor's Forum concluded yesterday in Juba.

Despite deployment of the UNMISS Peacekeepers in Jonglei, successive attacks by rebels and inter-ethnic conflicts have continuously taken place killing hundreds and displacing thousands of innocent citizens.

Nearly 80 people mainly children and women were killed in Jonglei during recent attacks in which the minister said the situation questions the role of the UNMISS peacekeepers deployed in the State though analysts also accused government of failing to protect citizens in the state by deploying enough forces.

Following the attacks, citizens of Jonglei including the religious leaders last month called on the Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG), Hilde F. Johnson, to quit his position in the country accusing her of not performing.

Aleu called for massive campaign on the Jonglei Crisis during the forum, proposing that a special government institution be established to only address Jonglei affairs in an effort to try minimizing the crisis.

“The problem of Jonglei is not the problem of Jonglei alone. As such, it must be addressed as a national issue,” Aleu stressed.

Since the end of the civil war in 2005 and consequent restoration of peace, instability in Jonglei has remained a critical challenge questioning the role of the government and its partners in restoring peace in the country.

Thousands of innocent citizens have since lost their lives as a result of attacks by rebels and inter-ethnic conflicts. ([Back to Top](#))

Governor challenges central government policies

Gurtong.net Juba, 2/12/2013 – Western Equatoria State Governor Joseph Bangasi Bakosoro has challenged the central government way of dealing with the states, saying any mistake committed by a particular state is charged on all the states.

Bangashi who could not point out exactly the mistakes being committed by the states and the punishment charged on his state too called on the central government to deal with the states directly and not generalize.

“States should be treated according to their performance,” Bangashi said while speaking yesterday during the closure of the four days Governor’s forum in Juba.

“We need our Central Government sometimes to consult with the States,” he urged.

He also challenged the Central Government over some of its policies which do not bring change in the country.

“An officer is dismissed in another State and is transferred to another State,” said Bangasi referring to indiscipline officers being in the army or police.

He urged that such officers instead of being deployed to another State after dismissal should be subjected to more training.

He said these kinds of policies should change and urged the Central Government to closely work with the states as building the new nation is a responsibility for all. ([Back to Top](#))

Sabuni: ‘Our borrowing has caught up with us’

Theniles.org Juba, 2/12/2013 – Finance Minister Aggrey Tisa Sabuni says the government does not have enough money to pay many of its civil servants.

Sabuni told reporters in Juba on Wednesday, November 20, that the government is currently cash-strapped, because it is trying to pay back USD 5 billion borrowed in order to offset a dollar shortage and fund government spending while oil production was shut down for more than a year.

Some civil servants say they have not been paid for two months. As Charlton Doki reports, the government says delays in the payment of salaries will continue for a couple of months before the situation normalises:

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Red Cross helps Bor flood victims

Gurtong.net Bor, 2/12/2013 – Jonglei State Red Cross Society has initiated plans to carry out a voluntary assessment next week targeting the most vulnerable flood victims in Bor County.

The Director of State Red Cross, David Gai Deer, said today that they decided to launch survey so that they are able to identify vulnerable in seven areas.

The areas will include some of the areas which did not receive humanitarian assistance especially Jarwong, Malek, Hai-machuor, Nigil and Hai-Fanjak.

“All these areas will be targets next week and then we will be able to assist them with some emergency such as shelters, blankets, mosquito nets, washing soaps, tarpaulin, cooking asset and other family materials,” Gai told Gurtong this afternoon.

Gai said they are not just targeting flood victims but will be able to assist people who have been displaced by the violence, adding that they will also be assisting returnees who come from Sudan.

The society is targeting isolated people such as those in Malek, an isolated village populated by leprosy victims.

He said that that community is the interest of South Sudan Red Cross.

The state Red Cross was not among the clusters and partners during the humanitarian assistance given to flood victims by the Relief and rehabilitation Commission (RRC) last month.

In his speech, he said the survey will soon begin on Tuesday and will end on Wednesday.

After the survey, they will be able to distribute some items to 1,000 households, approximately 4,000 individuals.

South Sudan Red Cross society has been helping People of Jonglei state in emergency cases such as the evacuation of the wounded people in violent prone areas this year. ([Back to Top](#))

Malakal hosts South Sudan vice president

Gurtong.net Malakal, 2/12/2013 – Upper Nile State government has received the South Sudan Vice President James Wani Igga for the commemoration of the World AIDS Day planned for tomorrow in Malakal.

The Deputy Governor of Upper Nile state has issued an executive decree creating a committee for the AIDS day commemoration and the welcoming of VP Igga who has arrived and will be present at Malakal stadium tomorrow for celebration.

The Committee to organize the Day and welcome the VP is headed by the state Minister for Finance, Ayong Awer Lual.

The World observes AIDS Day on December 1 every year to raise awareness of AIDS pandemic caused by the spread of HIV infection.

Government and Health officials observe the day often with speeches or forums on the AIDS topics.

By Sunday all shops in Malakal town were closed in preparation to receive VP.

During the week internal roads were leveled and Malakal electricity was restored two days ago. ([Back to Top](#))

JICA starts port rehabilitation

Gurtong.net Malakal, 2/12/2013 – The Japanese International Corporation Agency (JICA) has officially launched the groundbreaking ceremony for the rehabilitation of River Port at the Nile shores in Malakal town.

The launching took place at the River Port and was witness by the government officials of Upper Nile state, representatives of JICA, and the residents of Malakal.

Speaking during the occasion, Deputy Governor Hon. John Ivo Mouto thanks the government of Japan for their sincere help to the people of Malakal.

Mouto said that people were facing difficulties especially in getting goods out and into the boats at the port.

Deputy Representative of JICA in South Sudan Mr. Tomoki Kobayashi said that JICA as Japan development agency is mandated to implement the Japanese official development assistance focusing on long and medium term development.

He said before the independence of South Sudan JICA started extending the Technical Corporation and project support to the government and the people of South Sudan especially in the area of basic infrastructure, services and livelihood.

Mr. Tomoki said the operation in Malakal town came in response to the request by South Sudan government in 2012.

According to JICA, rehabilitation of the port will take approximately six months.

JICA has made a master plan project for development in three projects in Malakal being; road, water network connections and rehabilitation of Malakal port.

He said, “We have project for comprehensive planning and support for urgent development on social economic infrastructure in Malakal town for 2013.” [\(Back to Top\)](#)

Government to closely work with private vocational centers

News Agency of South Sudan (NASS) Juba, 2/12/2013 – The government will work closely with private Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) to ensure vocational training offered in the country meets international standards.

The Undersecretary for Labour in the national Ministry of Labour, Public Service and Human Resource Development, Madam Hellen Achiro Lotara, hailed private VTCs for complementing the efforts of the government in equipping the youth with skills to earn a livelihood.

Madam Hellen said last week that the ministry in collaboration with other stakeholders was working on a national vocational training policy which once approved would ensure that public and private vocational training institutions provide quality education to the youth. (READ: South Sudanese Youth Urged To Adopt Vocational Skills)

“It is the duty of the Ministry of Labour and Public Service to regulate and provide guidelines for the operations of vocational training institutions. We are working with private VTCs in order to harmonise vocational training curricula in the country,” said Madam Hellen, adding that harmonisation would ensure that vocational training provided locally was recognised nationally and internationally.

The Undersecretary also urged development partners offering assistance to the Republic of South Sudan in the vocational training sector not to limit their efforts to public VTCs but to extend their support to private institutions as well.

Madam Hellen was speaking in the Ministry boardroom when she received a delegation from the St Vincent de Paul Society of England and Wales who had paid a courtesy call on her.

Government to exempt training equipment and vehicles meant for vocational training institutions from being charged import duty.

They said the goal of the Society was to provide vocational training that responds to the needs of the labour market in the country, adding that vocational skills were the pillars of development in any country emerging from years of devastating conflict

Government launches child's rights, social protection consortium

Catholic Radio Network, 2/12/2013 – The Ministry of Gender, Child, Social Welfare, Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management launched last week the first high-level policy advocacy group in South Sudan to promote the rights of children.

The Child's Rights and Social Protection Consortium is comprised of influential South Sudanese leaders, including former Cabinet Ministers and MPs to lobby the Government and assist the Ministry in building its capacities to develop appropriate policies to care for all children, especially the most vulnerable.

“The poorest and most vulnerable children in any country are always at risk and we applaud this ground-breaking and wholly South Sudanese measure to ensure those who are most vulnerable will be protected,” said UNICEF Representative Iyorlumun Uhaa.

UNICEF provided technical assistance to the Ministry in setting up the consortium. [\(Back to Top\)](#)

Uganda troops kill LRA rebels in CAR

Washington Post Kampala, Uganda, 2/12/2013 – A senior commander of the Lord’s Resistance Army and 13 of his rebel fighters have been killed in Central African Republic, a Ugandan government official said Sunday.

Col. Samuel Kangul, believed to be the fourth in command of the Lord’s Resistance Army, or LRA, was killed by Ugandan forces Thursday, using intelligence gathered by United States advisers, said Ugandan Army Deputy Spokesman Maj. Robert Ngabirano.

About 100 U.S. Special Forces experts are helping African troops to hunt down LRA leader Joseph Kony, who is wanted by the International Criminal Court for war crimes and crimes against humanity. Kony’s LRA is accused by the United Nations and human rights groups of killing and mutilating innocent civilians and kidnapping thousands of children, forcing them to be soldiers and sex slaves.

“The killing of Kangul is of great significance for us in this operation to end Kony’s atrocities. It also shows that Kony is still in the jungle,” said Ngabirano.

Kangul was leading a group of about 30 fighters to join up with another group led by Dominic Ongwen, who is considered to be Kony’s deputy commander, said Ngabirano. The group was intercepted at a crossing on River Vovodo and a battle ensued, he said.

Kangul was in charge the LRA’s operations and logistics and he led armed raids in northern Uganda before the rebels were pushed out of that country in 2005, Ngabirano said. The Ugandan army said it seized satellite phones, 45 SIM cards, Global Positioning Systems, 9 sub-machine guns and 10,028 rounds of ammunition.

“Many others drowned in the river and we have no captives. It was an ambush laid by us. No soldier on our side died,” said Ngabirano. “It shows how weak LRA is now. They are in the most vulnerable position ever.”

LRA chief Kony has evaded capture for decades and became notorious in 2012 when he was featured in a viral video seen by more than 100 million people that was produced by the advocacy group Invisible Children. Kony’s fighters with the Lord’s Resistance Army are known for hacking off the lips and ears of their victims. The U.N. Security Council said in 2011 that more than 440,000 people across the region had been displaced.

When military pressure forced the LRA out of Uganda in 2005, the rebels scattered across parts of central Africa. Reports over the years have claimed that Kony was hiding in Sudan’s Darfur region or in a remote corner of volatile Central African Republic, where LRA fighters have killed at least 33 people so far this year and abducted more than 100 others.

Last month Central African Republic’s government said it is communicating with Kony, who is believed to be in the country’s remote southeast.

U.S. officials and others expressed doubt the reported talks represent a breakthrough in efforts to bring him to justice. The State Department said that U.S. authorities are aware that CAR officials have been in contact “for several months” with a small LRA group “that has expressed interest in surrendering.” The U.S. said it’s clear the LRA is facing significant pressure from African military forces.

“At this time, we have little reason to believe that Joseph Kony is part of this group,” the State Department said, adding that Kony and his senior commanders have used “any and every pretext to rest, regroup, and rearm, ultimately returning to kidnapping, and killing, displacing and otherwise abusing civilian populations.”

The U.N. Security Council late last month urged new efforts to end attacks by the Lord’s Resistance Army, release all people abducted by the rebel group and to send Kony to the International Criminal Court for prosecution. The council expressed serious concern that the continued instability and security vacuum in Central African Republic is hampering the operations against the LRA and may be allowing the contributing to the reinforcement of the LRA in the country. ([Back to Top](#))

SPLM-N denies attack on its stronghold in South Kordofan

Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 2/12/2013 – Sudan's rebel Sudanese People's Liberation Movement/North (SPLM-N) has denied reports that the Sudanese army carried out attacks on Kauda in South Kordofan state.

Kauda, the stronghold of the SPLM-N rebels, is located 92 km to the east of South Kordofan's capital Kadugli.

Media reports on Sunday spoke of heavy fighting around Kauda saying that Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) this weekend launched an attack and destroyed SPLM-N troops backed with heavy weapons.

Informed sources told Morgan network, a pro government news outlet that the SPLM-N lost several T-55 tanks, logistical support vehicles, fuel tankers, and a large number of dead and injured, saying that wounded soldiers were taken to Kauda.

But the SPLM-N spokesperson, Arnu Ngutulu, denied in statement to Sudan Tribune the outbreak of fighting around Kauda. He stressed that clashes took place last week around Kujurja and Wali areas, pointing that the SPLM-N issued a statement at the time speaking of SAF's defeat in those clashes.

The Sudanese army has not commented on these reports but the commander of the 18th infantry division in the White Nile state, Muntasir Sabeel, announced on Saturday victories of SAF in several positions.

Adam, who was addressing troops returning from battle zones in Abu Kershola, South Kordofan state, said that troops returned victorious and with high morale, pointing that another army division would leave for the battle zones in South Kordofan.

The sources, which are close to the process, further stressed that the government team is ready to join the negotiations when a definitive date is determined.

On Friday, the SPLM-N secretary general and chief negotiator Yasir Arman said they had been informed that the African Union High Level Implementation (AUHIP) would invite the Sudanese government and the rebel movement to meet in Addis Ababa in from 11 to 15 December.

Sudanese government chief negotiator Ibrahim Gandour recently announced their readiness to discuss a peaceful settlement for the conflict in the Two Areas but refuses the rebel demand for comprehensive talks. [\(Back to Top\)](#)

Sudan scoffs at ICG report on brewing dissent in the east

Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 2/12/2013 – The report issued by the International Crisis group (ICG) this week on East Sudan being on the verge of a new conflict over Khartoum's failure to implement the 2006 peace accord is nothing but "fantasy", an official here said today.

The London-based think tank said that frustration is growing rapidly among the people of the East which in some cases is creating secessionist sentiments and calls for backing rebels fighting to topple the National Congress Party (NCP) led government in Khartoum.

ICG further accused NCP of using divide and conquer tactics along tribal lines which is also adding to the tensions in the region.

But Mustafa Osman Ismail who is the government official in charge of East Sudan dossier said that the ICG report was prepared by some opposition activists in European countries.

Ismail who spoke on pro-government Ashoroq TV on Sunday said that the report is false and imaginary. He also stressed that the East is governed by its own people.

He went on to say that East Sudan is witnessing a balanced economic development unseen since the country's independence in 1956 and rejected describing the region as marginalized.

In its report, ICG blamed the situation over the non-implemented provisions of the East Sudan Peace Agreement (ESPA) including allocation of legislative and executive positions to Eastern Front (EF) former rebel group in federal and state institutions, East Reconstruction and Development Fund (ERDF) establishment as well as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of EF forces.

"The failure to implement the ESPA, together with NCP machinations, has hopelessly divided – mostly along tribal lines – the Eastern Front (EF), the alliance of armed groups that signed the agreement" ICG said. ([Back to Top](#))

Sudan's far right party call to improve relations with South Sudan

Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 2/12/2013 – Sudan's Just Peace Forum (JPF) has announced that it changed its policies towards South Sudan and called for improving relations with the new nation.

The JPF, a splinter faction of the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) is a radical Islamist and separatist party. During the transitional period of 2005-2011, it campaigned for separation between the northern and southern Sudan.

The political group is headed by Al-Tayeb Mustafa, president Bashir's maternal uncle. Its main forum is the best-selling daily paper Al-Intibaha, which is notorious for its aggressive rhetoric.

The JPF spokesperson, Satti Sorketti, called in a press conference on Saturday to improve relations with the Republic of South Sudan stressing "it is no longer an enemy to the Sudan".

Sorketti further demanded putting the border issues and dispute over Abyei area with South Sudan "in its true context", and dismissed reports saying that South Sudan had played a role in forcing Mustafa out of Al-Intibaha,

The JPF had deeply criticized the economic measures announced last September and condemned the bloody repression of the anti-austerity protests and as a result authorities banned Al-Intibaha but allowed it to resume on 3 November on the condition that Mustafa would step down as chairman.

Sorketti said that they managed to win the battle of identity against the secularist parties and now they direct their efforts to fight against corruption and the NCP's inability to govern Sudan, saying that the country and the society are on the verge of collapse.

He accused the ruling party of targeting the JPF and banning its newspaper, saying that the NCP stipulated that Mustafa steps down as the chairman of the board of directors and separates the JPF from the newspaper.

"The law, state, politics, and rights have become absolute property of the NCP", he said.

He added that the NCP doesn't seek to serve public interests but aims to clinch to power even at the expense of the country and accused unnamed influential figures in the government of standing behind the current problems within the JPF, saying that they incited "sacked members to split the JPF".

The JPF official also threatened to reveal names of those NCP influential figures soon.

He further said that some senior figures within the NCP deemed Mustafa more dangerous than the rebel Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF), pointing that the attack on the JPF's chairman is nothing but a character assassination attempt.

"We will stick to Al-Intibaha to the last gasp", he added.

The JPF deputy chairman, Hassan Al-Tom, for his part, asserted that they wouldn't abandon their ownership rights in Al-Intibaha, pointing that they might resort to other options to finance the JPF including issuance of a new newspaper. ([Back to Top](#))

Five East African states sign common currency deal

Washington Post Kampala, Uganda, 2/12/2013 – The five nations in the East African Community regional economic bloc have signed an agreement to adopt a common currency.

The presidents of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda met Saturday in the Ugandan capital, Kampala, to sign a protocol for the creation of a monetary union to be established in 10 years.

Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta, the new chairman of the EAC, says the monetary union will lower transaction costs in the region by eliminating losses incurred in exchange rates.

The EAC began 13 years ago with the goal of creating a common customs union, market, monetary union and a political federation of East African states.

Progress has been slowed, however, due to concerns of the member countries about the impact of the bloc's decisions on their individual economies. ([Back to Top](#))

US calls on American companies to invest in Sudan's agricultural sector: report

Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 2/12/2013 – The United States charge d'affaires in Khartoum Joseph D. Stafford called on American companies to invest in Sudan's agricultural sector, according to a news report.

Stafford who was on a visit to Nahr al-Neel state, told the pro-government Ashorooq TV that he realizes the difficulties facing the two countries as a result of US sanctions imposed but stressed that Washington demonstrated goodwill in seeking to improve bilateral ties through a candid dialogue.

He underscored the vital role played by Sudan in Africa and the world and expressed confidence that Khartoum will respond positively to Washington's overtures.

The U.S. diplomat also called on American companies to invest in Sudan's agriculture and particularly in Nahr al-Neel state due to the special advantages it offers. . ([Back to Top](#))

Where is South Sudan in achieving UN Millennium Development Goals?

Gurtong.net, 1/12/2013 – "UN agencies have declared that in South Sudan a 15 year old girl is more likely to die from childbirth than finish school"

As we commemorate World AIDS Day and with just a little over a year left until 2015, the year by which countries are expected to meet the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), now is a good time to ask where South Sudan is in achieving these important goals. I am especially interested in goal 4 to reduce child mortality, goal 5 to improve maternal health and goal 6 to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. These goals come with specific targets to: reduce under-five mortality rate by two-thirds; reduce maternal mortality rate by three-quarters; halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV; and halt and reverse the incidence of malaria and other diseases by 2015.

According to the most recent estimates from the 2006 Southern Sudan Household Health Survey, South Sudan's maternal mortality rate is the highest in the world at 2,054 per 100,000 live births. And although the second household health survey showed a decline of mortality rate for children under-five years from a staggering 135 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2006 to 102 per 1,000 live births in 2010, the latest numbers from UNICEF indicates that the under-five mortality rate rose to 121 per 1,000 live births in 2011.

To put these numbers in perspective, the maternal mortality rate means that there is at least 14% chance that a woman will die from pregnancy related complication in her life time and the under-five mortality rate means that 1 in 8 children will die before their 5th birthday. South Sudan stands out among its neighbours with these worst indicators. With exception of the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo, two countries still mired in conflict, which have worse indicators than South Sudan, the gap between South Sudan and her immediate neighbours is very wide.

According to a 2008 UNICEF report, the average maternal mortality rate and the under-five mortality rate for countries in the region were 210 per 100,000 live births and 43 per 1,000 live births, respectively. With respect to HIV prevalence, the ministry of health estimates the rates to be less than 3%. But the worry among experts is that given the limited available data, lack of widespread knowledge about the disease in the country, coupled with return of South Sudanese from countries with higher HIV prevalence rates, the rates are now almost certainly higher.

Based on all available data, it is very clear that South Sudan will definitely not achieve Goal 4 target of 72 per 1000 live births under-five mortality rate by 2015; UN agencies project the under-five mortality rate to remain alarmingly high at 108 deaths per 1,000 live births.

Millennium Development Goal 5 will also not be met. In fact, in UNDP's assessment, under the 2010 budget plans, goal 5 will never be achieved. It is also evident that goal 6 will not be met and it is feared that HIV rates may actually be on the rise.

So, where do we go from here? Pertaining to goals 4 and 5, a good starting point in the efforts to achieve these goals would be to understand the underlying factors for these unacceptably high rates in the first place. In the case of South Sudan, the reasons are clear. Some of the important factors that have been identified as major culprits include: shortage of properly trained healthcare workforce (according to the Ministry of Health there are very few trained midwives to attend to deliveries and the country has fewer than 200 medical doctors for a population that is now estimated to be over 10 million); substandard health care facilities; early forced marriages, which lead to extremely high adolescent birth rate, estimated to be 300 /1,000 births (UN agencies have declared that in South Sudan a 15 year old girl is more likely to die from childbirth than finish school); low vaccination coverage; poor sanitation that leads to all kinds of infections; extraneous duties during pregnancy and many other factors.

Concerning goal 6, the HIV rates are known to be higher among females than males. Given the low literacy rates among women, lack of knowledge about the disease in this vulnerable group is an important factor. This has further negative impact on maternal and child mortality rates, especially through mother to child transmission.

We now know that these goals will not be met by the deadline and we have no idea when, if ever, these goals will be achieved. The question is then, what will be done to start moving these numbers in the right direction, not just to fulfil the Millennium Development Goals, but because it is the right thing to do? This will, of course, require focused and determined efforts on the part of the government of South Sudan and its international partners.

In this regard, the 2011-2015 Health sector Development Plan and the 2011 National Reproductive Health Policy is steps in the right direction. Recent public pronouncements by the minister of health, the Honourable Dr. Riek Gai Kok, that healthcare have been designated as one of the top priorities is also encouraging. But the welfare of mothers and their young children cannot and should not be addressed by the health sector alone. This is a matter so vital for the survival of the country and it will require all stakeholders to play their part. More importantly those of us who care about the future of South Sudan and are practitioners or researchers in the area of maternal and child health need to do more to improve the situation. I for one stand ready to do my part in this endeavour.

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‘South Tel Aviv is South Sudan now’

The Times of Israel's Daily, 2/12/2013 – A member of the Bnei Israel, and historic group of Indian Jews who hail primarily from Mumbai, Menashe immigrated to Israel with her family in 1953. In the 1970s, she and her husband purchased an apartment on the top floor of a building in south Tel Aviv, just steps from where the new Central Bus Station now stands. She still lives there, in a crumbling, rat-infested building, one of three remaining Jewish residents sharing space with nearly 100 African migrants.

Israel is now home to some 60,000 migrants from Africa, most of them Eritrean and Sudanese. The vast majority of them live in south Tel Aviv, specifically in a several-block radius around Tel Aviv's Central Bus Station and Levinsky Park. As this group has come to south Tel Aviv, however, crime has spiked, with Israel Police reporting earlier this year that in 2012 there was a 53 percent increase in felonies by migrants in the area.

Menashe is bothered by the poverty around her, and by the crime and lawlessness that are poverty's offspring. But like many Jewish residents of south Tel Aviv, she paints the decline of her neighborhood in broad, racially-tinged strokes, casually injecting terms into the conversation that to an average listener might sound like hate speech.

“South Tel Aviv is South Sudan now. It’s no longer Tel Aviv,” she says. “And I’m scared all the time.”

Menashe insists she is not racist, and says that one reason she loves her neighborhood is that it has always been one of Tel Aviv’s most diverse and welcoming. What she cannot stand, she says, is the crime, the ugliness it creates, and the lurking fear has sprung up in its midst. After nightfall, she says, she now refuses to leave the house, and during the day she carries pepper spray.

“There have been foreigners for years in the area, and it never bothered me,” Menashe says. “Turks, foreign workers, other Africans. What’s happening here is different. It wasn’t like this.”

There have been two rapes in the darkened stairwell of her building, she says. Her gas and water is often illegally siphoned off, and sometimes she is awakened by drunken neighbors pounding on her door.

Menashe says the government has done very little to address the lawlessness in her neighborhood. So a few years ago she turned to the Israeli Immigration Policy Center, an organization pushing for a coherent government strategy to handle the flood of African migrants who have crossed the Israeli border in recent years and made south Tel Aviv their home.

Members of the group pay Menashe regular visits and have helped cover the costs of some repairs to her decaying apartment. They also take a clear political line, insisting that the vast majority of African migrants are not asylum seekers, but rather have come to the country for their own economic gain, working minimum wage jobs that pay drastically more than they could make at home.

“The issue in this area is not about race,” says Yonatan Yacovivitch of the Immigration Policy Center, citing a UNHCR statistic that says 77 percent of the Africans crossing into Israel are men between the ages of 18 and 35. “It’s that it’s all men ... That’s a classic economic migrant phenomenon. We’re talking about young men who leave their children behind, and their wives, and come here to work.”

Yacovivitch’s statistics notwithstanding, there are women and children from Africa living in south Tel Aviv, and many tell harrowing stories of oppression and war. The Eritrean government has a known history of violating its people’s human rights, and Eritreans have been flooding east Sudan in search of asylum for years. From there, thousands have opted to navigate a perilous smuggling route through Egypt and into Israel, facing the threat of beatings, rape and death in order to sneak across the Sinai and into the Jewish state.

But of the thousands of African migrants in Israel, only about 150 have been granted official status as refugees through the United Nations High Commission of Refugees. According to the UNHCR, the vast majority of Eritreans trekking through Sudan and Egypt toward Israel are doing so in a form of “mixed migration,” meaning they are doing so both to avoid political repression and also for economic gain.

Early in 2013, Israel completed construction on the main section of a fence along its border with Egypt, a move that stemmed the flow of migrants to a mere trickle. The move came a few months after the passing of an anti-infiltration law, which was later, overturned but then recently amended, and currently allows the government to detain infiltrators for up to one year.

Migrants who entered Israel before the construction of the wall, however, have told stories of being picked up by the military, held in detention centers for a handful of days, and then tossed into vans and dropped outside the Tel Aviv bus station.

“The police come, they catch these people, and what do they do? They bring them to south Tel Aviv,” says a man named Tiran, a shop owner in the neighborhood who asked that his last name not be used.

Tiran describes a pattern of governmental double standards, in which he often finds himself fined for transgressions like operating his shop on Saturdays or unloading merchandise on the sidewalk, while migrants who break housing regulations or operate businesses without licenses are ignored.

Oscar Olivier, a Congolese refugee who has been living in Israel for 20 years and is now an advocate for asylum seekers in the country, says that while south Tel Aviv residents do face crime and crowding, the deeper issues are being ignored.

“The government of Israel has been not been very brilliant in dealing with social inequality in the neighborhood, so they’ve given a scapegoat, and the scapegoat is African,” he says. “So now the Israelis are opposed to Africans, instead of being upset about the lack of creativity in finding solutions to the very real social and economic problems in south Tel Aviv. That is the heart of the problem.”

Hate speech, Olivier says, is nothing but a distraction.

“Israeli residents’ claims are legitimate — the neighborhood is overcrowded,” he says. “But they are turning to the wrong address. Rather than realizing they are a victim of the system, they end up describing the problems with xenophobia and violence.”

The Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality is tight-lipped on the matter. A spokesperson, who insisted on speaking anonymously, would not directly answer questions about law enforcement or willful placing of migrants in the neighborhood, but did insist that the needs of Jewish residents take precedence.

“The southern residents of the city are of top priority and there is a clear policy of preference toward these residents,” the spokesperson said in an email. “Yet the mayor believes we are obligated to care for the basic needs of the refugees and work immigrants in the field of social welfare, education and health.”

The city is well aware of the crime in the area, he added, and has poured millions of shekels into security cameras, better lighting and a localized police force that includes 30 patrol cars.

Down the street from Tiran’s shop, an Arab fishmonger named Muhammed scoffs at such a statement, insisting that the government has all but surrendered south Tel Aviv. Muhammed, an Egyptian, was granted asylum in Israel and now has Israeli citizenship, has lived in the neighborhood for 10 years and is married to a Filipina foreign worker.

“The government puts them here and forgets about them,” he says of the migrants. “They gave them this area to live. And eventually, everyone will flee from here. Even the foreign workers are leaving.”

For Menashe, however, leaving isn’t an easy option.

“Isn’t this the Jewish state?” she asks. “Why, in my own state, should I be asked to leave somewhere?”

Olivier, who works as a spokesperson and community organizer for the African Refugee Development Center in Israel, insists the issue isn’t about leaving or staying. It’s about Jews and Africans in the neighborhood learning to put aside their differences and work together to solve their shared poverty. He describes his 10-year-old daughter, who goes to the Bialik-Rogozin school in the neighborhood and learns alongside kids from 40 other countries.

“There is harmony and discipline there and there is no violence,” he says. “If more places like that would be built in the neighborhood, we could change things. There’s hope here. What is missing is the will to fulfill that hope.” [\(Back to Top\)](#)

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