

SUDAN: UN MISSION CONDEMNS 'CRIMINAL ATTACK' AGAINST ITS CONVOY IN ABYEI
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The United Nations peacekeeping mission in Sudan (UNMIS) today strongly condemned an attack against a convoy of its vehicles in the disputed area of Abyei, saying the assault constitutes a serious breach of previous agreements made between the two parties to the conflict there.

The incident took place yesterday evening in Dokura, an area controlled by the Southern Sudan Police Services (SSPS), about 10 kilometres north of Abyei town. The convoy that came under attack was transporting 200 troops of Joint Integrated Units (JIU) of the Sudan Armed Forces to their designated post, as part of the deployment plan under the Kadugli Agreements agreed by all parties.

"It is also a criminal attack against the UN. UNMIS calls on the parties to immediately investigate the incident and take appropriate action against the perpetrators of this deliberate attack," UNMIS said in a ["http://unmis.unmissions.org/Portals/UNMIS/MMR/UNMIS_Press_Statement_ABYEI_Eng.20.05.11.pdf"](http://unmis.unmissions.org/Portals/UNMIS/MMR/UNMIS_Press_Statement_ABYEI_Eng.20.05.11.pdf)>press statement.

"We remind the parties of their responsibility to protect civilians in the area. UNMIS remains ready to continue to assist the parties in the implementation of the Kadugli Agreement and urge them to do everything possible to stay on course in the implementation of this agreement and avoid any actions that could derail it," the mission added.

Under the Kadugli and Abyei Agreements, signed in January and March respectively, both the Government of Sudan and the Government of Southern Sudan committed to the total withdrawal of all unauthorized forces from the Abyei area, leaving the maintenance of security to the joint integrated military units and joint integrated police units, which are made up of personnel from both sides.

Earlier this month, the Abyei Joint Technical Committee, which is facilitated by UNMIS, agreed to start the withdrawal of all unauthorized forces and the deployment of the joint integrated units.

Deadly clashes have claimed dozens of lives since the start of the year, when a referendum on Abyei's status that was supposed to have been held never took place amid disagreement on voter eligibility.

Southern Sudan will secede from the rest of the country in July as a result of a separate referendum held in January and both north and south claim Abyei.

Last week, the Security Council voiced deep concern over the situation in Abyei and urged the two sides to reach an agreement on the area's status as soon as possible.

For more details go to