



**UN Secretary-General's Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide**

**and the Responsibility to Protect on the Situation in Abyei Region of Sudan**

(New York, 16 March 2011) Francis Deng, Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, and Edward Luck, Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Responsibility to Protect, have expressed grave concern at the increase of tensions in Abyei where recent violence between the Missirava Ache and the Nuer-Dinka ethnic groups and their allies has left more than 100 people dead and caused the displacement of at least 20,000 residents, many of whom had only recently returned from the North.

Reports that the Popular Defence Forces and the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the Sudan Peoples Liberation Army (SPLA) have been deploying into the region have heightened concerns. "Given the perception that the SAF supports the Missirava Ache and the SPLA supports the Nuer-Dinka, a stand-off between the two armies is very dangerous for civilians in danger and risk a return to full scale hostilities."

At the same time, the Government of Sudan (GoS) and the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) are dual citizens of the North and the South during the interim period before the stipulated referendum in the area. Deng and Luck reminded the Government of Sudan (GoS) and the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) of their responsibility to protect all civilians in Abyei and to hold those responsible accountable in order to discourage further acts of violence, including forced displacement, which is a crime against humanity.

The Special Advisers would like to request the Government of Sudan and the Government of Southern Sudan to expedite movement of the population and staff of the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) so that the Mission can discharge its mandate, including for the protection of civilians, internally displaced persons, and other vulnerable groups.

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