



United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)

Media & Spokesperson Unit
Communications & Public Information Office

PRESS RELEASE

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UNMISS mourns fallen Indian peacekeepers in memorial ceremony

The UN Mission in South Sudan held a memorial ceremony in Juba today for the two Indian Battalion peacekeepers who died in the 19 December attack on the UNMISS base in the Jonglei state town of Akobo. The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General (SRSG) for South Sudan, Hilde F. Johnson, paid tribute to Warrant Officers Dharmesh Sangwan and Kumar Pal Singh as “brave and courageous soldiers” and extended her condolences to the families and loved ones of the fallen peacekeepers.

The SRSG cited the press statement of the Security Council, issued on 20 December, which condemned the attack in the strongest terms and called on the Government of South Sudan to swiftly investigate the incident and bring the perpetrators to justice.

“As a mission, we are inspired by the dedication shown by the Indian troops,” said Ms. Johnson, who laid wreaths on the coffins of the slain peacekeepers during the ceremony which was held at the Mission’s compound adjacent to Juba International Airport. “Had it not been for their bravery, the death toll at the (UNMISS base) could have been higher.”

The SRSG asked UNMISS colleagues and other mourners to pray for the speedy recovery of Indian Battalion Warrant Officer Mondal Shabul, who was wounded during the attack on Thursday. Ms. Johnson also emphasized the resolve of the peacekeeping mission to carry out its mandate to support South Sudan and help protect its people.

“This horrendous act...will not stop us from carrying out our work,” said the SRSG. “To anyone who wants to threaten us, attack us or put obstacles in our way, our message remains loud and clear: we will not be intimidated.”

South Sudan’s Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Dr. Barnaba Marial Benjamin, reaffirmed his government’s commitment to fully investigate the incident and bring the perpetrators to justice.

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“The people of South Sudan deeply regret the irresponsible and cowardly act that has led to the loss of life of these great soldiers,” said the foreign minister. “We extend our deep condolences to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Security Council and to the UN family as a whole.”

In April, five UNMISS Indian Battalion peacekeepers died in an ambush in the Jonglei county of Pibor, and the Indian Ambassador to South Sudan Parmod K. Bajaj called on the parties to the current crisis in the country to resolve their differences peacefully through negotiations.

“In South Sudan, seven of our soldiers have laid down their lives during the performance of their duties,” said Ambassador Bajaj. “We are extremely proud and honored by their ultimate sacrifice, (which) will not go in vain.”

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