



United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)

Media & Spokesperson Unit
Communications & Public Information Office

PRESS RELEASE

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UNMISS DDR graduates the first group of the Weapons Marking Operators from South Sudan government uniformed services

UNMISS DDR is continuing to support the South Sudan Bureau for Community Security and Small Arms Control and Government of the Republic of South Sudan uniformed services by coordinating and hosting the first training for weapons marking operators in South Sudan. Fifteen representatives from SPLA, SSNPS, National Security, Wildlife and Prison Services will be trained at UN House, Juba, from 18-29 November, 2013 under the guidance of experts from internationally recognized companies in marking and tracking systems, FACTT and Traceability Solutions.

Andre Jordaan, from FACTT: *"The trainees will be taught the skills to set-up, operate, and maintain the marking and registration kits that have been purchased for South Sudan. The training also teaches the students the legal background to small arms control, weapons identification, and safe weapons handling procedures."*

Participant Martin Hakim David, Second Lieutenant, SPLA shares his impressions from the training: *"I am very proud that I was chosen by the SPLA Directorate for Logistics to participate in the Weapons Marking Training, as this project is really important for the government weapons control in the country. This training contains all the knowledge I need to be a weapons marking operator and bring positive results in my unit."*

In 2011 the Government signed the Nairobi Protocol which committed the country to work on the tracking and control of small arms. The aim of the Protocol is to improve regional security, reduce violence in communities and promote conditions for social and economic development.

"Weapons marking is one of the most important projects for the SPLA. Control of small arms in South Sudan is a significant problem; proper control and management of government weapons will help reduce crime and increase the security of our people. As well as marking weapons, the SPLA is focusing on training staff in safe weapons storage and stockpile management, and is seeking to build more secure storage for the army's weapons in 2014." – says Major General Marshal Stephen Babanen, SPLA Director of Logistics.

After extensive consultations with a number of organisations working on small arms regulation and control, at the request of the Government in February 2012, UNMISS procured ten mobile weapons marking kits and is planning to train 50 government staff as operators.

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Klem Ryan, UNMISS DDR: *"We are very pleased to be working with the government on this important project for South Sudan. The marking and tracking of firearms is a vital step in improving security for the citizens of South Sudan as it enables the government to better monitor and control government small arms, while increasing the accountability of the uniformed services."*

The weapons marking machines are valued at \$45,000 US Dollars each. To date, in combination with the training, UNMISS has spent more than \$500,000 US Dollars on this project, including a weapons marking research trip to South Africa in July 2013.

Since its inception in 2012, the weapons marking project has, made considerable progress in raising awareness on the importance of the establishment of a record system and effective tracking and registration for government weapons. The project has also led to the development of a broad consensus on weapons marking processes and buy-in from the government and uniformed services in South Sudan. The successful implementation of the training and initial marking phase is critical to maintain momentum on this important issue.

In 2014 the government, with the support of UNMISS, will work to implement a national weapons marking campaign of government-held small arms.