



SOUTH SUDAN FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC ALLIANC(SSFDA)
Chairman and Commander in Chief

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PRESS RELEASE

**UN Helicopter Incident in Nasir Raises Serious Concerns About UNMISS Neutrality:
Local Forces Showed Rare Restraint Amid Atrocities**

Nasir, Upper Nile State – The South Sudan Federal Democratic Alliance (SSFDA) has formally requested an independent international investigation into the fatal UN helicopter incident in Nasir, citing serious concerns over the neutrality and conduct of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

The incident, which occurred during an uncoordinated UNMISS helicopter extraction operation, resulted in the deaths of a UN co-pilot and a senior SSPDF general. According to eyewitnesses and verified local sources, UNMISS extracted armed SSPDF personnel without first disarming them—a violation of basic operational protocol that led directly to the fatal shooting.

“This was not simply an operational oversight—it was a grave failure with catastrophic consequences,” said Samuel Mut Gai, Chairman of SSFDA. “The people of Nasir exercised extraordinary restraint, and that truth has been entirely erased from the international narrative.”

The SSPDF general in question had been stationed in Nasir for over eight years and, under his command, government troops committed egregious war crimes against the local Nuer population, including torture, rape, arbitrary killings, and denial of food access by blocking the Sobat River.

Despite these atrocities, when the local self-defense forces captured the general, they did not execute him. Instead, they detained him inside a disabled armored personnel carrier (APC) for two days, choosing humanity over vengeance in one of the most disciplined acts of restraint recorded in this conflict.

Failure of UNMISS to Act Neutrally

UNMISS's helicopter arrived without transparent coordination with the local leadership. The extraction was reportedly ordered from Juba, involving both President Salva Kiir and First Vice President Riek Machar, and not through a consultative or community-centered approach.

Crucially, UN personnel failed to disarm SSPDF soldiers before transferring them into the UN aircraft. One armed bodyguard opened fire during boarding, triggering a firefight that killed both the general and the UN co-pilot.

International media reporting that followed presented an incomplete narrative, failing to acknowledge the atrocities committed by the general's forces or the discipline and restraint shown by those who had suffered at their hands.

Broader Political and Humanitarian Fallout

Since the incident, the South Sudanese government has used the incomplete narrative to:

- Justify the deployment of Ugandan troops;
- Arrest senior opposition leaders;
- Violate the 2015 ARCISS Peace Agreement;
- Escalate aerial bombardments on civilian areas, reportedly using 200kg incendiary bombs.

Additionally, inflammatory rhetoric from government officials has further threatened the safety of Nuer civilians in ancestral areas such as Nasir, Ulang, and Longechuk, raising red flags under international humanitarian law.

Call for Accountability and Action

SSFDA demands:

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- A full and independent investigation into the helicopter incident;
- Public recognition of the restraint shown by the local Nuer leadership;
- A transparent explanation of how the extraction was planned and who authorized it;
- A formal reaffirmation of UNMISS's commitment to neutrality and civilian protection.

“UNMISS must correct the record—not to justify any side—but to reflect the truth. Only then can it begin to regain the trust of communities who feel abandoned, vilified, and betrayed,” Mr. Gai emphasized.

About SSFDA


The South Sudan Federal Democratic Alliance (SSFDA) is a coalition advocating for democratic governance, human rights, and federalism in South Sudan. It supports inclusive peace processes and accountability for atrocities committed against civilian populations.

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