

Security Advisory: South Sudan

Executive Summary

As of 13 July, a ceasefire that ended heavy fighting has entered its third day and appears to be holding. The United Nations reported on 12 July that sporadic gunfire was heard in the capital Juba, adding that UN peacekeepers were able to carry out a limited number of short patrols. Outside the capital city however violence has spread, with the UN mission receiving a report of small-arms fire in Leer town in Unity state on Wednesday morning. The town is the birthplace of first Vice President Riek Machar.

On Wednesday, a spokesman for first Vice President Riek Machar disclosed that he has withdrawn with his troops to outside the capital Juba but is not planning for war. His current location remains unknown, with Machar's spokesman disclosing that the vice president would stay away from Juba until ceasefire details were worked out. The spokesman has also called for an outside force to be deployed to act as a "buffer" between Machar and South Sudanese President Salva Kiir's forces, adding that other demands from Machar's side are to implement a joint command, an integrated armed force and a joint police force security Juba. He notes that all of these issues have been laid out in a peace deal but have not yet been implemented.

A number of countries are beginning evacuations of their citizens out of Juba. An evacuation of German, European and other citizens with German Air Force craft from Juba is currently underway. The Indian government has made special arrangements to evacuate all Indian nationals from Juba by special aircraft on 14 July. All Indian nationals have been advised to get in touch with the Embassy of India in Juba immediately, adding that additional flights will be added if required. Meanwhile the US military in Africa disclosed on Wednesday that it has sent 40 additional soldiers to Juba to help secure American personnel and facilities. The US Embassy has also disclosed that it is organizing flights to evacuate non-essential staff and for all US citizens wishing to leave the country.

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While the SPLA/M-in Government and the SPLA/M-In Opposition declared a ceasefire on 11 July, the situation remains tense across the capital city. The fighting has left at least 272 dead, including 33 civilians, with aid workers reporting that bodies remain in the streets. The airport in Juba is open however commercial flights to the capital city have been cancelled. Charter flights are evacuating hundreds of aid workers and other foreign citizens. On Wednesday, Italy's foreign ministry confirmed that air force craft landed in Juba to evacuate thirty Italians who decided to leave.

The United Nations has disclosed that 36,000 South Sudanese civilians have fled their homes since fighting erupted on 7 July. Reports have now emerged that some who attempted to reach neighboring Uganda by road sustained wounds in attacks by armed men as they tried to flee. Many cars had also been shot at or burned. Government forces had erected roadblocks to demand money from those fleeing, with some people sent back to Juba.

In Juba, many continue to take shelter at UN bases, churches and air workers' compounds, with reports emerging that government soldiers have blocked aid workers from moving to areas where civilians need assistance.

MS Risk advises all in the capital and surrounding areas to remain vigilant when moving about the city due to ongoing security concerns. We advise vigilance throughout the remainder of the country, as there have been reports that violence has spread outside Juba. While the ceasefire appears to be holding, the security situation in the country remains fragile and violence can erupt again with minimal notice. Roadblocks have been set up at main entrances to the capital city and anyone trying to leave the city is advised to remain vigilant and adhere to instructions from local authorities.