

-Press Release-

Humanitarian situation in Malakal still not ripe to decommission PoC

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With the escalation of subnational violence across large parts of Upper Nile and adjacent areas of Malakal, the protection of civilians from violence as they try; to seek refuge at the Protection of Civilians site (PoC) camp remains paramount, humanitarian organisations are saying.

“We (NGOs) have been registering the daily arrival of people who are running away from insecurity in their communities, including but not limited to Fashoda and Tonga. As a humanitarian community working in the protection site, the fact that the IDPs feel safe inside the PoC other than in the surrounding communities means a lot,” says Cissy Kagaba, NGO Forum Secretariat Director.

“It is important to note that, sadly, we continue to see reports of armed actors pursuing each other across the breadth of Upper Nile, leaving communities at the mercy of these groups.

Past experiences, as told by residents at the PoC, indicate that their safety in the hands of UNMISS continues to be assured, especially during the time of armed violence-regardless of who is involved.

“In light of any near future proposals to position state actors to take over the responsibility of managing displaced populations, especially in Malakal, it is only right at this point for the extension of the UNMISS mandate to allow for engagement of all actors to reconcile efforts in management capacities, redesign of the current site and ensuring respect to diversity and continuity of life,” she says.

Thus, any plans to transition the PoC into an IDP soon should be put on hold until communities whose populations are now seeking protection are safe for return,” she notes.

When the other POCs transitioned into IDP camps two years ago, UNMISS recognized that the complexity of conflict made it unviable to transition the camp as per the principles establishing them. Since then observations of the severity of armed conflict has increased since November 2022 to January 2023.

Mindful of the expected expiry of the UNMISS Mandate, it is only fair to the communities seeking protection from the blue helmets, that the renewal of this mandate be made in earnest,” Cissy says.

As of February, the number of people seeking shelter and protection at the Malakal PoC stands at over 41000.

ENDS!

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